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Milton's Word Mosaic
Expressive Synthetic Syntax in *Paradise Lost*

by

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Abstract

This study seeks to revalue Milton's inversions of word order in *Paradise Lost*. Its focus is on syntax purely as word order; intraclausal, rather than interclausal, syntactical relationships; and contextual, rather than statistical, analysis. Its critical approach evaluates the poem's syntactical variations as they function *in situ*, not measured within or against an English "norm"; examines variations along a sentence's syntagmatic (horizontal word orders), rather than along its paradigmatic axis (vertical word substitutions); and derives its findings through contrasts between syntagmatic variations, rather than from *a priori* interpretations. Central to the study is an attempt to shift our metaphorical conceptions of *Paradise Lost*'s inverted sentences away from a strictly analytical "line" of thought, or "stream" of speech, which devalues syntactical variations, towards a synthetic "word mosaic," which tolerates variations as modes for expressive content.

The body of the study examines the poem's syntactical variations, first, from the perspective of linguistic Topicalisation; next, against the historical context of eighteenth-century analytical grammar, Latin synthetic pictorial syntax and Golden Lines, and Milton's own early translation of Horace's "Pyrrha Ode"; then, as a potential strategy for divine speech acts and accommodation; and finally, as a way to convey spatial, social, and psychological relationships within the poem.

The study ends with speculations on the aural and visual dynamics of Milton's synthetic syntax, guidelines for a pragmatic guide to *Paradise Lost* for analytically trained readers, and a call for a conceptual syntagmatics to complement the current field of conceptual semantics.

Chapter One

Introductions to the Word Mosaic: Genesis, Terminology, and Critical Approach

For me, the Genesis for this particular project began not with the Fall of Adam and Eve, but with the Fall of Icarus. In 1991, I was serving as a graduate teaching assistant, during my Master's degree, for Prof. Donald Hair's first-year literature survey at the University of Western Ontario. About halfway through the course, Hair was lecturing on W. H. Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts," and it was there that Hair first introduced his undergraduate students and me to the concept of *ut pictura poesis*. As Hair explained, the Latin phrase originated in Horace's epistle offering advice on poetic composition, his *Ars Poetica*[1], and it can be roughly translated in English, "as with a painting, so too with a poem." Through the centuries, the term had come to be taken by some as a synonym for the rhetorical technique of ekphrasis, "the literary description of a work of art" ("Ekphrasis," 2007).[2] As a poem describing Breughel's painting *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" fits squarely into that category.

Hair, however, took it further. What he suggested was that the poem not only seeks to translate the painting's visual content into words (i.e., to describe the painting semantically); it also simulates its form. The frame of the poem reproduces the frame of the painting: just as Breughel's painting places the boy's "white legs disappearing into the green" in the lower right-hand corner of his painting, Auden places the words "a boy falling out of the sky" in a correspondingly "untidy spot," the lower, right-hand corner, in his poem. This

mapping of the painting's spatial composition onto the spatial composition of the poem added a new dimension to the concept of *ut pictura poesis*. Words could convey meaning not only by what they meant (their semantic content), but also by where they were placed. What were globs of paint moved about on a canvas became words that could be moved about on a page.

That idea lay dormant for many years, but the image never left me. In the interim, I had the privilege of working under Prof. John Leonard, who at the time had just completed his book *Naming in Paradise*: *Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (1990) and was hard at work on his Penguin edition of *Paradise Lost* (2000). Under his guidance during my doctoral work, my interest in the verbal criticism branch of Milton studies grew, influenced (as it is in Leonard's work) by Christopher Ricks' book *Milton's Grand Style* (1963). Throughout these investigations, we stood firmly grounded in a close reading of the text with an eye to the *OED*'s historicised definitions of key words and editorial variants through the centuries of the poem's publication. Richard Bentley's infamous 1732 edition (in actuality a rewrite) stood out here as a barometer for textual cruces in much the same way as it does in Ricks' work.

Parallel to these studies, looking back, I would have to say that Prof. Tilottama Rajan became as influential to my theoretical approach as Prof. Leonard was. It was in two courses with Rajan, "Romantic Narrative" and "Post-structuralism Before and After Deconstruction,"[3] that I was introduced to the syntagmatic (horizontal word sequences) and paradigmatic axes (vertical word substitutions) as operators within a sentence. The *OED* provides two quotations as

examples of these terms. The first is Wade Baskin's (1960) English translation of Ferdinand de Saussure's posthumously published *Course in General Linguistics* (1916): "The syntagmatic relation is *in praesentia*. It is based on two or more terms that occur in an effective series" (II. v. 123). The second draws from Robert Henry Robins' (1964) *General Linguistics: An Introductory Survey*: "Paradigmatic relations are those holding between comparable elements at particular places in structures" (p. 49). This alignment of the syntagmatic relation with *praesentia*, or presence, and the paradigmatic, correspondingly, with absence came to be a major distinguishing feature of my critical approach, a distinction we will touch on a little later in this chapter and examine further in Chapter 6.

Upon these two critical and theoretical foundations represented by Leonard and Rajan, other courses would also make their contributions. A graduate course with Tilottama's father, Balachandra Rajan, a professor emeritus at the time, introduced me to postcolonial and gendered approaches to Milton. I was especially struck by a paper he presented that eventually became his article "Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves: Some Thoughts on Milton's India" (first published in 1995). Rajan's combination of historical research and interpretive layering would come to define for me the New Historicist approach, and it serves as the inspiration for my attempts in Chapter 3 to historicise Milton's language in *Paradise Lost* in relation to the Latin poetics that came before it and the eighteenth-century grammars that followed it. Along another theoretical axis, my graduate course in "Milton and the Romantics" with Angela Esterhammer (1994) introduced me to speech-act theory (what Halliday [1971] would call the

"interpersonal level of language"[4]), as outlined in her book *Creating States: Studies in the Performative Language of John Milton and William Blake*, a topic I will be tackling from a syntactical standpoint in Chapter 4. During this period, I also took two undergraduate Latin courses and participated in the Medieval Latin Study Group, pursuits that would contribute greatly to my understanding of the differences between a synthetic and analytical syntax—a key concept that would come, much later, to inform the central governing metaphor of this study's main title.

At this point, in 1995, my thesis project at Western, in which I was examining Milton's multiple negatives against the backdrop of the overlap between the primarily medieval emphatic double negative and its litotic Latinate equivalent, ground to a halt. What at first seemed enough material for a thesis now dwindled to barely enough for an article. Attempts on my part to link the micro-effects of multiple negatives to larger issues, such as the apophatic tradition (the *via negativa*) of religious experience and St. Augustine's concept of evil as the negation of good, became increasingly strained. Under the gravitational pull of what was then a long-distance relationship and financial burdens, I left the program to return to my hometown of Edmonton. It was there that I fell into freelance writing and editing, and my academic work gave way to applying and adapting many of those skills to projects as diverse as writing brochures for a haircutting salon and website copy for a blood-tracking system, and editing academic journals and romance novels. Over the course of about a year and a half, I finally became conversant in the hypercondensed, content-driven, colloquial

style of ad copy, and its parallels with poetry became more and more evident to me. Increasingly, I came to value how insights into the way language works (in all senses of that word) could be made relevant and applicable to the wider business and social arenas beyond the magic circle of academia. In 1996, a colleague suggested that I look into teaching a few English literature courses at a local community college to supplement my freelance income. One course led to two led to five, and in 1999, when Grant MacEwan College decided to launch its Bachelor of Applied Communication in Professional Writing, I saw this as an ideal opportunity to integrate my freelance industry experience with my academic knowledge.

Within that program, where I teach grammar, rhetoric, editing, business writing, and pop culture to this day, one course would come to be the catalyst for the project you are now reading. Early on in my PROW 100: Grammar for Writers class (now called Foundations of Composition), we cover parsing and the six (some say seven) basic patterns of English sentences. To illustrate some of the underlying principles we use to determine parts of speech and sentence structure, I present the students with two versions of the same sentence on the whiteboard. One is written in a hypothetically analytical uninflected language (much like our own), where word order primarily determines grammatical function:

The morning sun is slowly rising between the north and south peaks.

We know that *sun* is the subject, and not *peaks*, because of the former's position before the verb, whereas the latter becomes an object because of its position after

the preposition. The other version is in scrambled order to simulate a hypothetically synthetic inflected language, where word endings determine grammatical function:

[Between the north] *is slowly* **the sun morning** *rising* [and south peaks.]

In this version, the roman font in square brackets represents the inflectional endings for a prepositional object; the italics, the verb endings; and the boldface, the nominal subject ending (but on the whiteboard, I use different coloured markers instead). For most, the synthetic inflected sentence is nonsense, until they piece together how the sounds and forms of the word endings allow them to assemble the words according to their appropriate grammatical functions. Once the students are able to visualize the difference between the two language systems, I ask them why they think our hypothetical author of the inflected synthetic sentence placed the words in this particular order: After all, the inflected endings allow for a synthetic, rather than analytical word order, so the words could conceivably be arranged in any number of ways; why this one?

It is from that one fundamental question that the entire content of this project is generated. Within the classroom example, there is usually a long pause, until someone notes that the words in the synthetic sentence are placed in a symmetrical pattern. From there, another student, usually someone interested in poetry, advertising copy, or graphic design, will let out a gasp of recognition and describe how the peaks are at either end of the sentence with the sun slowly rising between them: The positioning of the words acts out graphically what the

sentence is describing. Here, we have Prof. Hair's (and presumably W.H. Auden's) concept of *ut pictura poesis*, but this time at the level of the sentence, rather than the poem as a whole. I had vaguely remembered mention of such expressive syntactical micro-effects occurring in Latin works (some of which we will examine in Chapter 3), and I wondered whether Milton might have been attempting to achieve similar effects in *Paradise Lost*. In 2006, I received a sabbatical year, reactivated my thesis at the University of Alberta, and with Prof. Robert Merrett as my supervisor, began to explore these avenues of investigation.

The results of that search are here in this document. They are far from conclusive, but I do feel they are enough to move my initial intuitions about the expressiveness of Milton's synthetic syntax from the realm of speculation to the realm of conjecture. In this respect, I am reminded of what Christopher Ricks (1963) notes at the end of his introductory chapter to *Milton's Grand Style*:

> I must say something briefly about the question of 'reading things into' a poet.
>
> Plainly there is no theory or dial which will tell whether or not a particular critical insight is true. We cannot expect proof; but we have a right to some degree of substantiation—an insight must be plausible. (p. 20)

My earlier speculations were valuable as a starting point, not as an end in themselves. Through speculation, we explore possibilities and test them against internal logical constraints and basic facts and data. If we deviate from these basic

facts, then we are engaging in such purely fictional enterprises as Peter Ackroyd's (1996) novel *Milton in America*. To move from the possible to the probable, however, we must work to mould speculation into conjecture, to build from our speculation "an opinion or conclusion based on incomplete information" ("Conjecture," 2009)—incomplete, yes, but information nonetheless. Without the discovery of an account written in Milton's own hand stating in incontrovertible detail that this indeed was what he was doing in *Paradise Lost*, the evidence I present here for the expressiveness of Milton's synthetic syntax remains circumstantial, incomplete, and inconclusive: the grounds for a conjecture, not a proof. However, even under such limitations, conjecture can still make a contribution as yet another "degree of substantiation," another step, on the long march to making our insights into Milton, if not true, then at least more plausible.

Before we begin this study in earnest, I think it would be helpful first to define some key terms and establish its critical methodology. *Syntax*, like *rhetoric*, is one of those words that is instantly recognizable by all, and yet means radically different things to different people. Ronald David Emma (1964) notes the slipperiness of the term in his book *Milton's Grammar*: "Time has come full circle and *syntax*, once reserved to that portion of grammar dealing with word order, is now associated with the more inclusive, or perhaps differently emphasized, concerns of style" (p. 137). This slippage of *syntax* into *style* is what motivates Emma to call the last chapter of his study "Clause and Sentence Pattern," rather than "Syntax," "to avoid the suggestion that anything like a full

inquiry into style has been undertaken" (p. 137). Ricks (1964) in his influential defence of *Milton's Grand Style* follows, for the most part, this slippery equation of *syntax* with *style*, in his two subchapters "Syntax and Sublimity" and "Syntax and Sense."[5] For the purposes of this study, however, we will return to what Emma sees as the original definition of *syntax* as "dealing with word order." As with Emma (1964), such an approach will "Inevitably [touch] on other stylistic issues" (p. 137), but we will take the syntactical features, in their linguistic sense, first, and then build up any stylistic points from there. In this way, we seek to keep the two terms distinct.

Another blurring of terms occurs when we look at the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes in relation to *syntax*. John K. Hale (1997) in his study of *Milton's Languages* cites three examples of what he sees as *Paradise Lost*'s "Latinism in Syntax": the ablative absolute, the predicative past participle, and "once-only local effects," such as Belial's use of the concessive *let* and Raphael's use of the passive "art seen" to mean *appear* or *seem* (pp. 110–12). However, these are substitutions along the paradigmatic axis, an operation of word choice, not word order. Although they are in keeping with Hale's study of Milton's multilingual diction, they are not properly within the province of syntax, in the sense of "the order of words in which they convey meaning collectively by their connection and relation" [*syn* + *taxis*, arrange with]: the arrangement of words, rather than their selection.

When modern linguistic studies do deal with the syntagmatic axis, they tend to focus on interclausal relations, rather than intraclausal word order. Judith

May Radner's (1991) impressionistic reading of ellipses in her thesis, *The Sublime Syntax of John Milton*, and Thomas N. Corns' (1990)[6] more rigorous and statistically based *Milton's Language*, both examine these interclausal relationships in passages from *Paradise Lost* (and in Radner's case, also *Paradise Regain'd*). For example, Corns finds statistical evidence for a preponderance of hypotaxis in the poem, where "clause supports clause, which supports clause, through a long chain of subordination and elucidation" (p. 25), while for Radner, "the sentences give us experiences that in some particular way mimic or imitate…incomprehensible phenomena, and that thus enable us, in some measure, to participate in them" (p. 17). The relationships in these studies are between subordinate, relative, and main clauses, not between their individual constituents (subjects, verbs, objects, prepositional phrases, modifiers) within a clause, the exclusive domain of this study.

More importantly, although this study shares Emma's definition of *syntax*, it seeks to avoid normalising that syntax in *Paradise Lost*, as Emma does in *Milton's Grammar*. Although he concedes that Milton's inversions of Subject, Verb, Object (SVO) occur "in almost one-fourth" of his sample,[7] Emma takes great pains to place this increased frequency within the standard deviation of Milton's Elizabethan and seventeenth-century compatriots (p. 140); this, despite the fact that he records 83.3 per cent of Milton's poetry following standard SVO, while the Shakespeare sample weighs in at 93 per cent, a figure much closer to his Modernist sample of *The Wasteland* at "nearly 100" (p. 143). Such inconsistencies move Estelle Haan (2007) to place Emma within "the school of

linguistic denial," alongside Alistair Fowler's attempts "to de-Latinize Milton's vocabulary" (p. 686) in his Longman edition (1968) of *Paradise Lost*. Even Emma's use of the term "NE" (Normal English), as opposed to OE (Old English) and ME (Middle English), reinforces the standard within which he seeks to make Milton fit. Instead, we will be analysing Milton's expressive synthetic syntax as it appears *in situ* and in context within the poem, as an object in and of itself capable of its own linguistic and expressive effects.

In his article "Milton's English" in the *A Companion to Milton*, Corns (2001) attributes the paucity of modern studies in Miltonic verbal criticism to two causes. The first, and root cause, comes from the field of linguistics:

> The failure of this approach [applying linguistics to literary analysis] to break through as a major perspective in English studies in part reflected the popularity in influential circles of linguistic systems premised on the semiotics of Saussure, rather than the then current models, which owed much to the followers of J. R. Firth and to Noam Chomsky. (p. 93)

Although we will return to some of Saussure's concepts (syntagmatic presence and paradigmatic absence, the "eye" and the "ear," *langue* and *parole*) in our concluding chapter, the body of this study is primarily an application of Chomsky's Transformational Grammar as a tool to derive insights into Milton's inversion of word order in *Paradise Lost*. Corns notes "'verbal criticism' figures significantly" in only three articles (including his) in the *Companion*'s 498 pages,

but for Estelle Haan (2007) such work "inaugurated" the "Milton language school" (pp. 686–87). With the increasing popularisation of psycholinguistics through works such as Steven Pinker's (2008) *The Stuff of Thought*: *Language as a Window into Human Nature*, this redirection of critical interest back into the Chomskian line of linguistic inquiry is sure to continue. I count this study as part of that movement.

The second contributing cause for the neglect of the verbal criticism comes from within Milton circles, rather than from without. As Corns notes, "In part, the failure owed something to Stanley Fish's withering critique, most devastatingly expressed in his essay 'What is stylistics and why are they saying such terrible things about it?'" (p. 93). The withering effect radiates primarily from Fish's (1980) charge that such linguistic studies (commonly referred to at the time as "iconic grammar") rest on a logical circularity: "they produce interpretations which are either circular, mechanical reshufflings of the data—or arbitrary—readings of the data that are unconstrained by anything in their machinery" (pp. 89–90). Fish takes Halliday's (1971) analysis of William Golding's book *The Inheritors* as representative of this circularity: "Halliday's interpretation precedes his gathering and evaluating of the data, and it, rather than any ability of the syntax to embody a conceptual orientation, is responsible for the way in which the data are read" (p. 82). To make the circularity clearer: the iconic grammarian starts with an impression about the text (in Halliday's case, the superiority of Golding's "new people"), identifies a syntactical pattern, and then shows how that grammatical feature "enacts" the original impression. With

Halliday, the old "people's use of transitivity patterns argues a Neanderthal mind," but for Fish (p. 82), and I would agree with him, there is quite an argumentative gap between transitivity and Neanderthal psychology (whatever that may be). Because the syntactical data are merely made to conform to the original impression, that interpretative act is both the starting premise and the conclusion of the argument, and so that argument cannot stand without it. Thus, without a necessary relation between the data and the impression, in which the data generate the impression first, rather than the other way around, the overall argument falls as circular.

One way that some recent Milton studies have attempted to address Fish's "withering critique" is to surrender to this circularity of interpretation. Whereas the iconic grammarians held to an illusory stance of scientific objectivity, these studies foreground, to varying degrees, the subjectivity of their investigations, rather than outright deny it. Fish (2001) himself provides an excellent example in *How Milton Works*. Here, he takes the description of Satan in Book I, where the Great Adversary, attempting to rally his fallen troops, "gently raised/Their fainting courage" (529–30).[8] Within this passage, Fish makes an important substitution:

> The key word here is "rais'd," a unit of sound that can bear several meanings; in this case the relevant homonyms point in opposite semantic directions: "rais'd," in the sense of elevated or honored, versus "razed"—that is destroyed, made into nothing—which is itself closely allied to "ras'd," as in "erased" or wiped clear of marks. (pp. 479–80)

Estelle Haan (2007) uses a similar technique in her essay "'Both English and Latin': Milton's Bilingual Muse," when she substitutes the associative polyptotons (words with the same root) for *brute—brutal*, *brutish*, *Brutus*—into Satan's incarnation within the serpent (inspiring the animal's "brutal sense" with intelligence [9.187–90]) and Eve's startled response to her enemy's serpentine arrival ("tongue of brute" [9.554] and "the rest/Of brutal kind" [9.564–65]). Within the framework of these associative substitutions, Satan becomes a type of Brutus and so "if Eve is a second Caesar, so Adam is perhaps a second Mark Antony" (p. 695) and the entire temptation becomes "an 'assassination' of sorts" (p. 693). John Leonard (2001) in his *Companion* article "Self-contradicting Puns in *Paradise Lost*," on the other hand, chooses to insert historically apt *OED* definitions of *to entertain*—"show hospitality to," "admit and contain," "hold between," "treat in a [cruel] manner," "engage on the battlefield" (p. 398)—into Satan's soliloquy upon seeing Adam and Eve: "hell shall unfold,/To entertain you two, her widest gates" (4.381–83). These puns lead Leonard to a "gleeful flaunting of a malevolence that is at once open and hidden,…an important part of Milton's conception of Satan" (p. 399).

Although these three approaches yield very different results—Fish's indeterminacy, Haan's associative typology, and Leonard's word play—they all use a form of insertion along the paradigmatic axis of the line. The basis for that insertion is as varied as the critic: Whether it be vocal homonyms, intertextual polyptotons, semantic variations, the choice of system originates with the critic, and then, the argument is built up from there. For the interpretation to stand, that

base choice must be granted first, but there is nothing that necessarily privileges one system over the other. They are all true, but no one is any more true than the others. As for the degree to which each critic foregrounds the arbitrariness of his or her interpretative base choice, Fish notes that the "unit of sound *can* bear several meanings" and Haan uses the conditional "*if* Eve is…, so Adam is *perhaps*…": Both make it clear that these are *possible* interpretations of the line, not absolutes. Leonard (1990), on the other hand, would interpret the "arbitrariness" of his choice in its etymological sense of "arbitrated" or "judged," rather than the more deconstructionist bent toward "random" or "based on whim," but regardless, the choice to privilege that particular methodology still rests with him (and the readers who agree with him) as the final "arbiters" in that decision.

My methodology does not entail a rejection of any of these paradigmatic insertions; I feel they are valid and valuable explorations of the text within their own interpretative frameworks. I do not present this method as a replacement of paradigmatic explorations, but rather as another interpretive dimension, a contrasting critical alternative, added to the field. Here, we will operate exclusively along the syntagmatic axis. We will take inverted lines from *Paradise Lost*, compare them to their analytical equivalents (as we did with "The morning sun" classroom example), and see what expressive content is generated by the former, but not the latter. The advantage I see to this method, from a theoretical standpoint, is that it may open up our eyes to interpretative paths that can cross and recross the prison-house boundaries of Fish's circularity: first, because the syntactical data comes first, and the expressive content (the interpretation) follows

from it; and second, the analytical contrast is generated by the base and Topicalisation rules of Transformational Grammar, not by my "whim" or even "arbitrated judgement." That choice of methodology is still mine to make, and the reader is free to follow along or not, but I offer it up, not as more objective or scientific, but rather as a new and different application of some of the tools and terminology of linguistics to Miltonic verbal criticism in a way that operates beyond the strictures of Fishian circularity. In the end, we may discover that *Paradise Lost* has more to tell us about the language we speak today than we at first thought.

An ill-chosen metaphor can be a dangerous thing, and so when Prof. Merrett asked me to come up with a governing metaphor for this project, I thought long and hard. I knew I wanted to address the attack levelled upon the style of *Paradise Lost* by the Leavis group of critics, a challenge that Corns (2001) suggests "remains unanswered" today (p. 90). I knew that part of that challenge rested with statements such critics make about the constructivist or architectural quality of the verse, or as Leavis (1936) scathingly puts it: "a good deal of *Paradise Lost* strikes one as being almost as mechanical as bricklaying" (p. 62). Although Leavis does not provide any specific examples of that "bricklaying" in his *Revaluation*, Ezra Pound (1917) does in his "Notes on the Elizabethan Classics" written almost 20 years earlier. That is why I chose Pound as the focus for my defence of Miltonic style: His critique precedes both Leavis's and Eliot's (1936, 1947), and though Pound's analysis is brief, his example, unlike those provided by Leavis or Eliot, is concrete and accurate (Chapter 2 stands as my

detailed response to it). In a sense, by choosing Pound as my focus, I am seeking to attack the Leavisite position at its root, a stratagem made all the more telling when we consider that Pound receives only a footnote in Ricks's defence of *Milton's Grand Style*. From there, Pound led to Lewis, who led to eighteenth-century grammarians, who led to Latin, which led to the "word mosaic."

In essence, the word mosaic is Leavis's "bricklaying" stripped of its aesthetic (and class-based) value judgements. What the metaphor suggests is that Milton composed *Paradise Lost*, not as a vocal string, or a stream of thought, but rather as a series of discrete word tiles, or tesserae, placed on the page to produce an image, or expressive content. As in a mosaic, we cannot see the big picture by pressing our faces up against the fragmented surface and picking away at the mortared gaps; we need to step back and let the holistic pattern of the discrete coloured flecks emerge. *Paradise Lost*'s syntax is indeed constructed, architectural, and artificial, but it is only a trick of our perspective, with its relatively modern expectations of a seamlessly analytical "natural" sentence structure, that makes the poem's syntactical deviations appear ugly and fragmented.

Overall, then, what this project seeks to do through its examination of Milton's poetic and linguistic practices, his place within the history of the language, his knowledge of both the achievements of, and commentaries on, his Classical precedents, is to conjecture that in *Paradise Lost* we have the equivalent in English for what Friedrich Nietzsche, in his *Twilight of the Idols*, found in Horace's odes:

> This mosaic of words, in which every word by sound, by position and by meaning, diffuses its influence to right and left over the whole; the minimum in compass and number of symbols, the maximum achieved in the effectiveness of those symbols.
>
> (Qtd. and Trans. in Wilkinson, 1945, p. 4)

The leap from Milton's epic enterprise to Nietzsche's comments on Horace is a speculative one, but what this document will attempt to do in the succeeding chapters is to reveal the intermediate steps that would move that speculation to the level of a conjecture. Once these are in place, we may find that what Leavis (1936) and others have seen as Milton's "complete and systematic…callousness to the intrinsic nature of English" (p. 56) is actually the poet's attempt to expand the boundaries of English to achieve through a kind of tessellated syntax the kind of *multa in parvo* perfected in Classical Latin. In other words, when Nietzsche says, "In certain languages that which Horace has achieved could not even be attempted," Milton's works, and especially *Paradise Lost*, demonstrate that English is not intrinsically, by either its nature or evolution, one of those languages. In Milton's word mosaic, then, we may find not only the attempt, but also the achievement—if only we have eyes to see it.

Notes

[1] W.J.T. Mitchell (1986) in his book *Icononology* provides the most in-depth examination of Horace's phrase in relation to the different image-making media of painting and poetry. Although it is Horace's phrase that became the label for the "sister arts" aesthetic movement Mitchell examines, Horace was undoubtedly compressing Simonides of Ceos's legendary antimetabole, "Poetry is vocal painting, as painting is silent poetry," an original source noted by both Lessing in his *Laocoon*, and by extension, Mitchell (p. 48).

[2] All citations are in *American Psychological Association* (APA) format. I chose this system because it conserves space and provides a clear historical context for each secondary source in-text. Additionally, APA, with its applications to the social sciences, provides a better fit with the linguistic aspects of this project.

[3] Rajan's (2002) insights here would later be captured in her book *Deconstruction and the Remainders of Phenomenology: Sartre, Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard.*

[4] In his essay "Linguistic Function and Literary Style," Halliday (1971) outlines three functions for language: the ideational, which "serves for the expression of content" (p. 332), or language at the level of semantics or the referential; the interpersonal, where language serves as "the means for [a speaker's] own intrusion into the speech event"; and the textual, the "function internal to language" where "language makes links with itself and with the situation" (p. 333). In essence, what this study seeks to prove is that there is a kind of ideational, or expressive, content operating at the textual level of Milton's syntax, distinct from the purely semantic.

[5] In "Syntax and Sublimity," Ricks deals with the withholding of the verb in the poem's opening lines, Belial's use of successive speculative "What if…" clauses followed finally by the declarative "This would be worse" (2.186), and Satan's aphoristic "Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n" (1.263) after the "surge of feeling" (p. 31) that precedes it. All these are relations between clauses and phrases (interclausal), rather than relations between elements within a clause (intraclausal). Such periodic constructions are so commonplace that they hardly count as radical deviations from "the usual order" (p. 27) of English. (In this interclausal approach, Ricks follows the same method as later studies such as Radner [1991] and Corns [1990]).

In "Syntax and Sense," Ricks covers the passive (in Raphael's account of creation, 7.502–04), Adam's elliptical account of his first words (8.280–82), and "the complication" followed by the "energetic simplicity" (p. 38) of Satan's search for Eve (9.421–25) and his encounter with Death (2.666–71). (We will deal with his response to Alcides and Lichas in Chapter 5). Like the periodic construction, the passive and ellipses are difficult to place outside the "norm" of English, and of themselves, do not count as deviations in word order within a clause. In short, they are stylistic variations, rather than syntactical deviations.

[6] Corns (1990) does reference some intraclausal elements, but only in relation to line divisions separating "subject from verb or verb from object or copula from complement," a feature which he calculates occurring in "58.7 per cent of examples" (p. 42). Overall, he sees such "intraclausal division" as "too pervasive

for each example to command [the] sort of interpretative ingenuity" critics such as Archie Burnett (2003) assign to them (pp. 43–44). Here, however, we are examining intraclausal inversion, not division by line breaks.

[7] Although Corns (1990) sees Emma's overall sample (containing about 8000 words from Milton's prose and poetry) yielding "significant conclusions about pervasive phenomena such as accidence," he sees the poetic sampling of "fewer than 140 sentences" as incapable of capturing "larger features, such as sentence structure" (p. 3). For the purposes of this study, it is also significant to note that Emma (1964) extracts his poetic passages, "chosen for their importance and for the variety of language" (p. 19), from *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regain'd*, *Samson Agonistes*, and *Comus*. As I will suggest in Chapter 6, the more oral nature of *Comus* (as a masque) and *Samson Agonistes* (as a closet drama) further skews Emma's results.

[8] All quotations are from John Leonard's 2000 Penguin edition of *Paradise Lost*, unless otherwise stated. Since this project focuses primarily on how the poem's synthetic sentence structures are received by a modern analytical audience, Leonard's edition, with its notes confined to the back of the text, its modernised spellings, capitalisation, and supplied elisions (e.g., *–ed* for *–'d*), allows us to focus primarily on the syntax. How the removal of such typographical markers from the original manuscript would affect the pragmatics of our oral performance of the poem remains a fruitful area for future research.

Chapter Two

"Syntax Backward Running": Pound, Lewis, and Miltonic Topicalisation

Gary Kamiya (2003), in his Salon.com introduction of *Areopagitica* to a modern audience, provides a good summary of the varied responses through the ages to Milton's sentence construction in *Paradise Lost*. When Kamiya describes Milton as "one of the supreme poets in the English language, whose epic attempt to 'justify the ways of God to man' has awed and given colossal headaches to generations of English majors trying to navigate the whitewater sublime of his syntax backward running," his playful phrase "syntax backward running" both defines and demonstrates the Classical rhetorical scheme of anastrophe, "the departure of normal word order for the sake of emphasis." The etymology of the term from the Greek reinforces a sense of "backwardness" to these syntactic departures—*ana* "back again" and *strephein* "to turn, a turning back"—and the Latin synonyms contain within them a sense of inversion (*inversio*) or reversal (*reversio*, *trajectio*) ("Anastrophe," 2007). So why does Milton do it? What is he trying to emphasize? Does anastrophe's reward of inducing sublime awe in some readers outweigh its risk of causing "colossal headaches" for others? And does anastrophe, by its very nature, necessarily make Milton's epic sentence structure retrograde or deviant in relation to the "norms" of the English language? According to Transformational Grammar, such departures, or more accurately, displacements, of sentence elements from their "expected" positions are referred

to as Topicalisations, but even within this more modern vocabulary, such sentences are still displacements of a norm, deviations from what is expected.

Against the larger backdrop of nearly 350 years of debate about Milton's style since *Paradise Lost* was first published in 1667, two critics stand out as zeroing in on Milton's specific departures from expected English word order, his "syntax backward running." As so often happens in Milton studies, both critics attribute these Topicalised deviations to the same root linguistic principle, and yet each ascribes to those deviations polar opposite effects and values. Let us first consider Ezra Pound (1934) who at the beginning of "Chapter Five" of his *ABC of Reading*, launches into a brief, but precise, invective against Milton's verse in *Paradise Lost*. Pound begins with "The great break in European literary history" at "the change over from inflected to uninflected language." He explains that inflected languages, such as Greek and Latin, "have little tags, or wagging tails, and the tags tell whether the noun is subject or predicate." The dropping of these tags in "our modern contemporary European languages" is, for Pound, a sign of their linguistic evolution. He concludes his overview with "The best way of using a language with these signs and labels [inflected tags] attached to the words is NOT the best way to use a language which has to be written in a certain order if it is to be clear" (p. 50). Thus for Pound, there is a clear distinction between inflected and uninflected languages, so when Milton uses an inflected method in an uninflected language such as English, he is not only writing "bad" poetry, but violating linguistic categories as well. In fact, as Pound suggests, Milton's epic poetry is bad *because* it violates these categories.

C.S. Lewis (1942) also locates *Paradise Lost* against this same historical linguistic continuum, but draws a very different conclusion from that placement. For Lewis:

> A fixed word order is the price—an all but ruinous price—which English pays for being uninflected. The Miltonic constructions enable the poet to depart, in some degree, from this fixed order and thus to drop the ideas into his sentences in any order he chooses. (p. 47)

Although Christopher Ricks (1963) in his defence of *Milton's Grand Style* would later object to Lewis's "any order he chooses" as "a bit light-hearted or wilful for the sort of choice to which a great poet is impelled" (p. 87), Lewis does limit these departures from expected English word order through the qualifier "in some degree": The Miltonic construction, with its marked Topicalisations, allows for some poetic license, not unrestrained licentiousness. For Pound, however, this window of syntactic opportunity defies an uninflected language's inherent requirement that its sentences "be written in a certain order." According to Pound, Milton's use of such inflected techniques as Topicalisation in uninflected English leads, at best, to obscurity, and at worst, to linguistic chaos. Lewis, meanwhile, provides the mirror image of Pound's argument, but with the values reversed. For Lewis, Pound's "certain order" becomes "fixed," and Pound's lack of clarity becomes Lewis's "fluidity." Thus, what Pound sees as a violation of linguistic categories, Lewis sets up as a syntactic subspecies of what Milton calls, in the 1668 second issue's prefatory defence of the epic's blank verse, "ancient liberty

recover'd to Heroic Poem" (Hughes, 1957, p. 210). In short, for Lewis, Milton's word order deviations are an attempt to recover the relative syntactical freedom of an inflected language, but in uninflected English.

It is important here to note, I think, the difference in values informing each position. Pound implies a system of evolutionary progress in languages from inflected forms to uninflected ones. He makes this progression clear when he identifies German as "the least developed" of the European languages because it "retains the most inflection" (p. 50). Within this value system, then, uninflected languages are more advanced, while inflected ones are more primitive, with the more developed forms replacing the archaic through a kind of linguistic "survival of the fittest." Thus, to Pound, the Miltonic constructions (as Lewis terms them) appear atavistic, like the syntactic ghosts of inflected dinosaurs competing within a poetic ecosystem dominated by more nimble uninflected mammals. For Lewis, on the other hand, the Miltonic constructions are valuable, not for where they stand against an external yardstick (i.e., evolutionary progress, classical versus modern, "bad" versus "good"), but rather for what they do. In other words, the difference, for Lewis, between inflected and uninflected systems is one of function, an intrinsic measure rather than an extrinsic one.

A second important consideration is the very different logical relationships each position inserts between an inflected and an uninflected language. For Pound, the two systems are disjunctive and mutually exclusive: There was a "great break" between European inflected and uninflected languages, and the first form "change[d] over" into the second. That linguistic divide is one that cannot

and should not be crossed: It is categorical and historical. For Lewis, however, the two systems are more interactive and interpenetrating: Miltonic constructions, with their greater syntactic freedom and Topicalisation, stand as a third term complicating the abstract binary of inflected and uninflected language. Because *Paradise Lost* is a poem written in English, an uninflected language, and in places, it uses word order that is usually only within the province of an inflected language, Lewis's position assumes that the two language systems are contraries, able to admit of a middle term. Pound, on the other hand, sees the two systems as contradictions, and so Milton cannot write in both systems—and still produce "clear" English poetry.

The linguistic reality, of course, supports Lewis rather than Pound. Though highly inflected, languages such as German, Russian, and Hindi still thrive today, and English, though it is still losing many of its inflections, is still "considered a weakly inflected language," not a purely uninflected, or isolating, one like Chinese or Vietnamese ("Inflection," 2009). While it is true that the loss of inflections in English does shift the language towards a more analytical syntax—as John Nist (1966) notes, "The fact that a *lovely* woman may drive *slow* in Modern English indicates the morphological flexibility and the functional shifts possible with the analytical method, in which stress and syntactical positioning determine meaning" (p. 122)—English still retains many inflectional paradigms: for example, strong verbs (I *am*/ you *are*/ he *is*), verb tenses (*walk*/*walked*), number (they *walk*/ he *walks*, *cat*/*cats*), and most pronoun cases (*I*/*me*/*my*/*mine*/*myself*; *we*/*us*/*our*/*ours*/*ourselves*). Thus, contrary to Pound,

inflected languages do not necessarily have a linguistic evolutionary advantage, and rather than there being mutually exclusive inflected and uninflected languages, in the Indo-European group, each language can be plotted on a scale from "more" inflected to "less" inflected, and its placement along this scale of contraries may shift through time. Meanwhile, in terms of syntax, Lewis's "free" or "fluid" word order is often referred to as "synthetic," while Pound's "clear" or "fixed" word order of SVO (Subject/Verb/Object) is commonly known as "analytic." More inflected languages tend to be more synthetic, because each word's "tag or tail" signals its grammatical function, whereas more uninflected languages usually tend towards an analytical syntax where a word's position signals its function—usually, but not always, and it is this space between the contraries that allows Lewis's Topicalised Miltonic construction to exist.

How strange it is then, given the limitations of Pound's overall argument, that his example of a Miltonic construction should illustrate better the concept of a synthetic word order within English than Lewis's does. Pound (1934) selects a line from God's announcement to the angels of His anointing of the Son, and places the Miltonic Topicalised construction against its analytical equivalent:

> When Milton writes
>
> 'Him who disobeys me disobeys'
>
> he is, quite simply, doing wrong to his mother tongue. He meant
>
> 'Who disobeys him, disobeys me.' (p. 51)

The first line is synthetic, a precise example of "syntax backward running," because the grammatical functions of the words are driven more by their inflected forms, rather than by their position: Him (objective pronoun), who (subjective indefinite pronoun), disobeys (verb), me (objective pronoun), disobeys (verb). The second is analytical, because the grammatical function is determined primarily through positioning within an expected SVO pattern: Who (subject), disobeys (verb), him (object), disobeys (verb), me (object). Because English retains the inflectional paradigms for its pronouns, the synthetic version should still allow for the third-person pronouns *him* and *me* to be taken for the objects of their respective verbs, despite their shift, their Topicalisation, to what is normally a subject position (before the verb) within an analytical syntax.

Theoretically, then, both versions of the line should be equally comprehensible, but for Pound practice trumps theory: "[Milton] had studied his English, not as a living language, but as something subject to theories" (p. 51). The "living" language favours an analytical system of syntax, and so when Milton deviates from it, though theoretically correct according to Topicalisation rules and the remaining English inflectional paradigms, he is unnecessarily mixing his linguistic signals. In the Miltonic construction, *him* will inevitably be misread by an analytical reader as a subject, not an object; *who* will be taken as a relative pronoun linking *him* to the verb, not as the subjective indefinite pronoun; and *me* will always be misread as the object of the first *disobeys*, not the second. Thus, the theory-driven synthetic word order when fed through analytical practice tends to produce, at least at first read, what amounts to tautological nonsense: "him

[who disobeys me] disobeys." In the time it takes for the reader to shift back from the expected analytical order to the intended synthetic one, any poetic force has been dissipated according to Pound's system, and so, to be clearer and more efficient as a poet, Milton would have done better to follow his mother tongue and stick to the more efficient analytical word order. Because the analytical syntactic signal is the one that dominates the living practice of English readers, according to Pound, the synthetic Topicalised Miltonic construction can never truly avoid this pothole of misreading and rereading.

To be fair, we must acknowledge that Pound stacks the typographical deck to encourage these misreadings. Milton's original lines include a line break after the first *disobeys*: "Him who disobeys/Me disobeys" (5.611–12). This verse marker serves to separate the first verb from the second verb's object (*Me*). Pound, however, omits it from his version of the Miltonic construction ("Him who disobeys me disobeys"), and then compounds this sin of omission by including a comma in his own analytical rewrite: "Who disobeys him, disobeys me." In short, Pound uses a new typographical signal (the comma) in his own version that he denies to Milton's and yet omits the typographical signal (the line break) Milton actually included.

How much weight we place on the presence or absence of these typographical markers, however, is debatable. Presumably, such markers would be part of what Thomas N. Corns (2001) characterises as a sensitive (p. 91) or "competent" oral performance of the poem: "the best guidance the reader can have about Milton's verse is the evidence of his or her own ears. Hearing the

poem read by competent readers—and reading it aloud oneself—are exercises of enormous value" (p. 92). Meanwhile, Archie Burnett (2003) in his article "'Sense Variously Drawn Out': The Line in *Paradise Lost*" provides a list of possible effects for a line break: "The end of a line may be a place to stop, or merely to pause or rest; it may be a point at which to move on or, more specifically, down" (p. 69). Later, in Chapter 6, "Sound and Vision: Speculations on Pragmatics and Milton's Conceptual Syntagmatics," we will see how inverted word order itself, distinct from punctuation and line breaks, plays a significant, if unconscious, part in Corns' "competent" performance of the poem, but for Pound's argument to work, here, all he need prove is that some English readers will have trouble with the lines as Milton wrote them, whereas no English reader would have trouble with the analytical rewrite. Pound's comma and Milton's line break, as effective signals only for Corns' "sensitive" and "competent" readers, are insufficient proof that no English readers would have trouble with the lines, and Burnett's list, because it allows for enjambment both as a "place to stop" and "to move on," cannot guarantee that an analytic reader would not read Milton's line as Pound (mis)presents it. Even stripped of its typographical markers, Pound's version of the Miltonic construction is still an accurate representation of how *some* analytical readers *could* miscomprehend the line, and thus, his argument stands.

We will return to Pound's overall evaluation of his example in a moment, but first, we must contrast his example with Lewis's. Lewis cites two passages as Miltonic constructions that use "fluid" synthetic syntax within the less-inflected linguistic environment of English. In the first, Adam is giving an account of the

drowsy sleep that God instils upon him before the creation of Eve:

> there gentle sleep
> First found me, and with soft oppression seized
> My drousèd sense, *untroubled* though I thought
> I then was passing to my former state
> *Insensible*, and forthwith *to dissolve*.
>
> (8.287–91, italics mine)

For Lewis, the positioning of the modifier *untroubled* makes its referent uncertain: The past participle could be referring equally to the preceding *sense* or the subsequent *I*. He sees similar doubtful references for the adjective *insensible* (is it Adam [*I*] or the *former state* that is/was insensible?) and the infinitive *to dissolve* (what exactly is dissolving? The state? Adam? His droused sense?). For Lewis, such referential uncertainties serve a mimetic function, in that, they are "exactly right" for the kind of mental dissolution Adam is going through, and so, the "syntactical mystery helps rather than hinders the effect" (p. 47). When the perceived boundaries between subject and object are themselves dissolving, it is unreasonable to expect anyone to get his or her modifying references right. Also, from Adam's psychological perspective within his account, all states, all times, all things (including himself) *are* dissolving; the new insensibility of sleep *is* indistinguishable from the vaguely remembered oblivion of his precreated state; both he and his senses *are* strangely untroubled. In short, according to Lewis, the passage perfectly mimics how the slide from consciousness to unconsciousness would be perceived by someone who is doing it for the first time.

Lewis's second example is more metaphysical, than psychological. Here, he quotes Raphael's description of the gates of heaven:

> Heav'n opened wide
> Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
> On golden hinges *moving*. (7.205–07)

Similar to the first passage, the present participle *moving* can be modifying either *gates*, *sound*, or *hinges*, and in fact, for Lewis, it is modifying all of them simultaneously: "This melting down of the ordinary units of speech, this plunge back into something like the indivisible, flowing quality of immediate experience, Milton also achieves" (p. 48). The gates, the sound, and the hinges are all moving in unison. Further, both the sound and the hinges are moving and being moved, in that, both nouns could be the subject of the present participle's absolute phrase (*sound* moving, *hinges* moving) or the object of the present participle as a modifier of *gates* (*gates* moving sound, *gates* moving their hinges). For Lewis, such grammatical blurring and simultaneity mirrors the "Harmonious" way things happen and are perceived in Heaven. Lewis's reference to "immediate experience" recalls Raphael's earlier proviso to the archangel's heavenly account:

> Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
> Than time or motion, but to human ears
> Cannot without process of speech be told,
> So told as earthly notion can receive.
> (7.176–79)

Therefore, as Lewis's phrase suggests, Raphael's fluid modifiers are grammatical techniques used by the archangel to accommodate immediate divine experience and actions to sequential human speech and perceptions. (We will return to the role of both Lewis's fluid modifiers and synthetic syntax in this accommodation in a more in-depth way in Chapter 4, "'Th'Omnific Word': Syntax, Performance, and Accommodation in Divine Speech.")

Although Lewis's accounting of the Miltonic construction's mimetic expressiveness is ingenious and compelling, his examples, unfortunately, are not properly the province of a transfer of a synthetic inflected syntax into a primarily uninflected language. Within an analytical system, modifiers should be referring to the word (usually a noun) that they are closest to in position. *Untroubled* occupies what is often described as a "squinting" position, because it stands between two possible referents, *sense* and *I*, and so could be modifying either one. *Insensible*, *to dissolve*, and *moving* all occupy the end position of their respective phrases, a position notorious in English for its referential instability: Does "Jack ate the doughnut, only" mean he "only ate," he ate "only the doughnut," or he ate "the only doughnut"? According to the analytical rule, there should be no uncertainty: *Untroubled* modifies *sense*, *insensible* and *to dissolve* modify *state*, and *moving* modifies *hinges*, because these are the closest antecedent nouns to their respective modifiers. However, in English practice, modifiers in these "squinting" positions tend to slip back through a sentence and attach themselves, through implication, and haphazardly, to the appropriate referent. A common joke illustrates this gap between the "rule" and its practice (and in some ways, the

difference between *langue* and *parole*): A woman goes into a store and says, "I would like to try on those clothes in the window," and the salesperson says, "We do have a change room, you know." If we all practiced the grammatical rule, then we would find the salesperson's misreading merely ungrammatical, not humorous. In an ideal analytical world, Lewis's Miltonic constructions would be similarly stripped of their mystery and metaphysical flow. We could just move each modifier out of its "squinting" position and so lock it analytically to a referent specified by its new and improved position, but this revision would result in a change in meaning as drastic as the doughnut's shift from the object of the only action, to the only object of the verb, to the only object left—and once again the "fluid" effect of both passages would be lost.

But there is another more radical way we can strip Lewis's Miltonic constructions of their grammatical magic: We can translate them into Latin. As Richardson (1962) notes, such "squinting modifiers" are not a problem in Vergil's inflected Latin: "Although Virgil often uses sentences equally complex [as Milton's], the Latin case endings prevent such obscurity of grammatical relationship" (p. 325). Though Lewis's overall argument about the Miltonic construction is sound, his examples illustrate an effect possible only in the referential gaps modifiers occupy in English's more analytical syntax. Within inflected Latin, the effect disappears because the modifiers *untroubled*, *insensible*, *to dissolve*, and *moving* would each have its own inflected case ending (Pound's tag or tail) that would fix it to only one specific referent. Therefore, within Lewis's examples, Milton is exploiting a feature inherent in English, not Latin.

Milton's thorough knowledge of Latin's synthetic syntax may have highlighted for him the potential for this effect in the more analytical English, but it would have been as a result of the contrast between the two systems, not the application of the one system to the other. Pound's example, meanwhile, is truly an instance of "syntax backward running," and would stand in both the English and its literal Latin translation, a sign that whatever is happening in the line is common to both systems.

For Pound and his followers, however, such translatability is the problem. In his earlier "Notes on Elizabethan Classicists," Pound (1917), using the same line as an example of Milton's "sin or error" (p. 237), says, "[Milton] tried to turn English into Latin; to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, neglecting the genius of English, distorting its fibrous manner, making schoolboy translations of Latin phrases" (p. 238). Later in the *ABC of Reading* (1934), not much has changed: "Milton did it [inverted the word order] because he was chock a block with Latin" (p. 51). F. R. Leavis (1936) in his famous attack on Milton's Grand Style in *Revaluation* would elaborate and extend Pound's argument for the habitual nature of Milton's deviation in word order:

> Milton's transfusing [of Latin constructions into English] is regular and unremitting, and involves, not pleasant occasional surprises, but a consistent rejection of English idiom.... So complete, and so mechanically habitual, is Milton's departure from the English order, structure, and accentuation that he often produces passages that have to be read through several times before one can see how

> they go, though the Miltonic mind has nothing to offer that could justify obscurity—no obscurity was intended; it is merely that Milton has forgotten the English language. (pp. 55–56)

Here, as with Pound, "English idiom" and "English order" equal an analytical syntax, and as we have seen with Pound's example, an analytical reader does tend to have to "read through" the passage "several times" to separate out the Miltonic construction's Topicalised synthetic syntax from a mass of analytical preconceptions. Pound does concede that his analytical version "doesn't make good verse. The sound is better where the idiom is bad [i.e., in the original Topicalised version]," but for him, these minor benefits to "sound" are obliterated by the far more grievous harm done to the sense. T. S. Eliot (1936) echoes the point and adds another piece to the overall argument:

> Thus it is not so unfair, as it might at first appear, to say that Milton writes English like a dead language. The criticism has been made with regard to his involved syntax. But a tortuous style, when its peculiarity is aimed at precision (as with Henry James), is not necessarily a dead one; only when the complication is dictated by a demand of verbal music, instead of by any demand of sense. (p. 141)

Thus, the Pound/Leavis/Eliot rejection of the Miltonic construction rests on two presuppositions: (1) the dead, Latin, synthetic syntax is a "departure" from the

living, English, analytical syntax, and (2) in the absence of any sense-making precision, or expressive content, to the inversions, as a counterbalance to their tortuousness, the Miltonic construction remains ultimately "senseless," a mere translation, a mechanical habit, an empty "verbal music"—all syntactical sound and fury signifying nothing.

In terms of the first presupposition, we have seen how English retains inflected elements, but how does the contrary relationship between inflected and uninflected languages apply specifically to its syntax? In linguistics, one of the most common instances of word order inversion in English is the wh-question. For example, we know that the verb in the following question is singular because its true subject is the noun that proceeds, rather than precedes, it:

[What effects] *does* Milton's **use** of inversion *have* upon the sense?

According to Transformational Grammar, this identification of the corresponding subject is the result of a grammatically competent individual's ability to translate (or transform) the inverted word order into its "expected" analytical equivalent:

Milton's **use** of inversion *does have* [what effects] upon the sense!

The first, because of its Topicalisation, or displacement, of the wh-phrase *what effects*, is called a wh-question, while the second, without the Topicalisation of the phrase, becomes an "echo-question." Here is how Jamal Ouhalla (1999) describes the grammatical play between function and position in the two versions:

> In the echo question, the wh-phrase appears in the object position of the verb, which is consistent with its interpretation as an object of the verb. In the wh-question, however, the wh-phrase appears in the initial position of the sentence. Now, if the position occupied by the wh-phrase in the echo-question is assumed to be the DS [Deep Structure] position of the wh-phrase in the wh-question, the latter can be said to be derived by a transformational rule which moves the wh-phrase from the object position of the verb to the initial position of the sentence. (pp. 68–69)

The wh-question is relegated to the Surface Structure (SS), while the echo-question becomes the Deep Structure, because the first is derived from the second according to a transformational Topicalisation rule. Thus, we determine the subject of the wh-question's verb by transforming it in our minds into its echo-question equivalent and then assigning the appropriate function to the noun (**use**) according to its non-Topicalised "deep" position.

Although the Surface and Deep Structures are related through their transformations (Ouhalla calls them "linked" [p. 67]), they do not, however, mean the same thing. A wh-question is "used to ask for (new) information. The answer provides the information asked by the wh-question," whereas an echo-question is "usually used to express surprise at information just made available to the speaker" (p. 68). There is an expressive content to the Surface Structure (a request for an answer) that is not there in the Deep Structure (an expression of surprise at

an answer already given). In this way, the inversion of word order in wh-questions serves a specific expressive function: distinguishing a genuine request from an expression of surprise. Halliday (1971) in his essay "Linguistic Function and Literary Style," cites the question and its answer as an example of the interpersonal, in that, the act of asking automatically contains within it inherent relations of knowledge, or ignorance, between the speaker and the listener (p. 333). The transformative difference between the wh-question and its echo suggests that the ideational expressive content, which Halliday attributes solely to the semantic level, can also be found at the textual level, where "language makes links with itself " (p. 333) through the functional signals of Topicalisation.

Applying these principles to Pound's (and by extension, Leavis's and Eliot's) argument, we see that not all departures from expected SVO are as alien, foreign, or "tortuous" as they first appear: We navigate quite easily through these particular instances of "syntax backward running" millions of times a day whenever we ask, read, or hear a wh-question in English. More importantly, these everyday inversions are not senseless, mechanical, atavistic, or mere sound: The Topicalised wh-phrase in the Surface Structure is essential because it contains a unique expressive (Halliday would call it ideational) content incapable of being transmitted through the corresponding "expected" Deep Structure. Word inversion, then, at least in wh-questions, is not an end in itself, but rather a means toward a very clear and distinct expressive end.

Here, we run into a slight problem, though, and it is one that will take us to the limits of Transformational Grammar: Pound's example is not in the

interrogative mood (a wh-question), but the indicative. The question, then, remains how Topicalisation works in statements, rather than questions. Using the terminology of Transformational Grammar, we would designate Milton's original line as the Surface Structure:

[Him] who disobeys,/[Me] disobeys.

The line involves two Topicalisations: *Him* moves from the expected objective position to "the leftmost constituent of S" (Ouhalla, 1999, p. 64), in other words, the beginning of the sentence (S), or the expected subject position, and *Me* moves to the expected subject position in relation to the second verb. Pound's analytical rewrite, therefore, becomes the Deep Structure:

Who disobeys him,/Disobeys me.

According to Ouhalla, this Deep Structure is "where all categories may appear in the positions where they are expected to be by virtue of PS [Phrase Structure] rules and the subcategorisation requirements" (p. 67). Thus, a sentence's Deep Structure will always follow the expected positioning, and those expectations are, fundamentally, analytical.

In this way, the synthetic Miltonic construction will always be secondary, a "surface" layered over top a greater linguistic "depth." Ouhalla makes the secondary status of the synthetic clear when he describes how such sentences are generated:

> The rules of the Base together with LIR [lexical insertion rules] are said to **base-generate** DS representations which serve as input to transformational rules. Transformational rules introduce modifications to DS representations, by, for example, moving a category from one position in the representation to another and derive SS representations. (p. 67)

The Base comes first, which then generates the Deep Structure, which then, in turn, is transformed through Topicalisation into a Surface Structure. When we read a synthetic construction, then, we are essentially working through the same process, but in reverse: We see the Surface Structure, apply the rules of Topicalisation, and uncover the Deep Structure generated by the Base. In short, the synthetic, derivative Surface Structure becomes a means toward the end of recovering an original, analytical Deep Structure—and the base rules that govern it.

Such a view, modern though it may be, is not far off from the way some readers have experienced *Paradise Lost* in the past. The Victorian scientist John Tyndall (1868) in "An Address to Students" describes the joys of what amounts to a de-Topicalisation of the epic poem:

> English grammar was the most important discipline of my boyhood. The piercing through the involved and inverted sentences of *Paradise Lost*, the linking of the verb to its often distant nominative, of the relative to its transitive verb, of the preposition

> to the noun or pronoun which it governed, the study of variations in mood and tense, the transpositions often necessary to bring out the true grammatical structure of a sentence, all this was to my young mind a discipline of the highest value, and a source of unflagging delight. (p. 101)

In "piercing through" the poem—parsing it and then reassembling the order of the sentences—Tyndall is, in fact, enacting the linguistic process of retrieving the poem's Deep Structures from its synthetic Surfaces. As in linguistics, Tyndall's mental exercise, by bringing out the "true grammatical structure of a sentence"—in other words, its analytical Deep Structure—from the "involved and inverted sentences"—the synthetic Surface—is an end in itself, generating Base rules for the linguists and "unflagging delight" for Tyndall.

Unfortunately, neither of these pleasures would satisfy Pound. Whether *Paradise Lost*'s anastrophes are rhetoric for its own sake, epic conventions for their own sake (Vergil's epic contains inverted word order; Milton is writing an epic; therefore, Milton must use inverted word order), linguistic experimentation for its own sake (the gene-splicing of Latin synthetics into analytical English), or mental de-Topicalisation exercises for their own sake, the Miltonic construction is still there for the sake of something other than poetic expression. Although Pound (1936) tends to overstate the case, he suggests such an argument against this particular brand of Miltonic apologetics in his *ABC of Reading*: "When the writing is masterly one does NOT have to excuse it or to hunt up the reason for perpetrating the flaw" (p. 51). Masterful poetry, then, must speak for itself as a

poem, and so any other explanation is not only irrelevant, but as a supplement, it ultimately calls into question the poetic self-sufficiency of expression of the very piece it first sought to defend. For the Miltonic construction to be masterful, according to Pound's criteria, it must have an expressive content akin to the wh-question, a significance that it alone can generate, distinct from its analytical equivalent. In the indicative, however, Transformational Grammar falls silent: Its main objective is proving that the Topicalised Surface Structure is still grammatical, because it can be traced back to the Deep Structure and the base rules that generate it. Any expressive content unique to that Topicalised Surface Structure lies beyond the explanatory imperative at the heart of Transformational Grammar itself.

So, in Pound's example, can Milton's synthetic Topicalised Surface Structure, his "syntax backward running," express content that the analytical Deep Structure equivalent cannot? The Miltonic construction "*Him* who disobeys/*Me* disobeys" (5.611–12) places the Son (*Him*) and God (*Me*), first. The analytical equivalent would put those *Who* rebel first, and place God and the Son last in their respective clauses: "*Who* disobeys him, disobeys me." When we consider that the anastrophe's departures from expected word order are designed to emphasize certain words or concepts, then the analytical Deep Structure gives those who rebel greater emphasis, whereas the synthetic Surface Structure displaces that emphasis onto God and the Son through their respective pronouns' "unexpected" Topicalised placements. This synthetic shift in emphasis is in marked contrast to Satan's famous retort to Abdiel in Book V: "*We* know no time when *we* were not

as now;/(*We*) Know none before *us*, self-begot, self-raised/By our own quick'ning power" (859–61). In these lines, no one does, in fact, come "before" Satan and his followers in every sentence: As agents and grammatical subjects, their precedence is reinforced by the solid analytical syntax. In the second sentence of Satan's declaration, the implied subject (*We*) and the object of the preposition (*us*) even surround the direct object (*none*): Here, Satan not only begins his sentences with himself (and his followers); he both begins and ends with himself, in a kind of solipsistic epanalepsis. How different these placements are from God's edict, where that assumed precedence of the rebel subject (*who*) is undercut, usurped, and displaced (i.e., Topicalised) by the synthetic positioning of those divine pronouns, *Him* and *Me*.

The two speeches with their different grammatical structures—God's synthetic, Topicalised Surface Structure; Satan's analytical, non-Topicalised Deep Structure—express very different hierarchies and power relationships, but this is not to suggest that every instance of Miltonic Topicalisation is expressive of a divine hierarchy nor that every Deep Structure is Satanic. When Adam resolves to fall with Eve in Book IX, for example, he uses Topicalisation to anticipate Satan's response to fallen humanity's hypothetical obliteration:

> lest the Adversary
> Triúmph and say; Fickle their state whom God
> Most favours, who can please him long? *Me* first
> *He* ruined, now mankind; whom will he next?
> (9.947–50)

Here, Adam's synthetic placement of the object *Me* before the subject *He* shifts the emphasis to the plaintive Satanic victim, an emphasis compounded by the adverb *first* and, following Bennett, the visual isolation of the two words before the line break. All this serves to undercut the agency of the subject God (*He*), rather than reinforce it. It is the same type of Topicalisation as we have seen in Pound's example, but this time, it is levelled at a very different target, and therefore, it is expressive of a very different hierarchy and a very different content. Thus, the expressive content of each Topicalisation is highly context dependent (we will look at some of these other contexts in later chapters: divine language in Chapter 4, "Th'Omnific Word" and worldly language in Chapter 5, "A Catalogue of Inversions"), but if we were to translate (or transform) universally every instance of Milton's Topicalised Surface Structure into a standardized Depth—as Ouhalla, Pound, and even Tyndall suggest—then all such expressive nuances would be scrubbed clean from the text. What we would gain in greater ease of comprehension, we would lose in expressive content.

Lest we discount such pronoun placements as too minor or subtle to carry an appreciable expressive effect, I would like to draw our attention to a few instances in contemporary commercial writing where pronoun choice and positioning do shape a potential reader's perception of a text and its expressive content. Imagine, if you will, a cover letter for a job application in which every sentence begins with the pronoun *I*. What image of the applicant does such a pattern potentially create in the employer's mind, either consciously or unconsciously? Does the applicant have an overblown sense of his or her own

abilities? Will she or he take criticism well? How well will he or she work in a team? These are all questions that such an overemphasis on the first person can elicit. Similarly, in advertising, one of the common mistakes companies make in their ad copy, starting out, is to emphasize what they or their product can do for the customer or client: *We* provide great service, the *XL 2000* handles 900 copies per minute, *it* meets many of today's business needs. Instead, the "you-viewpoint" outlined in many business writing textbooks recommends putting the customer or client first—literally: *You* get great service, *you* can copy 900 pages per minute, *you* can meet *your* business needs. Finally, a recent advertisement for the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) reveals some of the potential applications for Miltonic Topicalisation in today's business environment. The tagline for the campaign ran "At RBC, we put you first." According to the principles we have seen in this chapter, who is the company really putting first? By Topicalising the sentence, the company could convey a very different relationship to its customers: "You, we put first at RBC." Here, as in *Paradise Lost*, the synthetic Surface Structure syntax reinforces the sense in a way that produces an expressive content profoundly different from its normalised, analytical Deep Structure.

Philip Davis has explored this interplay between comprehension and expression in Shakespeare, but by way of a very different methodology. In his short book *Shakespeare Thinking*, Davis (2007) argues against paraphrasing Shakespeare's language because "putting together semantics and syntax, mind and brain, it *is* an irreducible language, a code of its own—not simply standing for something else but *being* that something else" (p. 90). Applying this principle to

Miltonic Topicalisation, we see that the Surface Structure does not stand in for the Deep Structure. It is its own code, with its own expressive content. When Pound rewrites Milton's line according to what he sees as English's "clear" and "certain order," when Tyndall pierces through *Paradise Lost*'s "involved and inverted sentences" to extract "the true grammatical structure," when the linguist transforms Milton's Surface Structure to its Deep Structure, they are all paraphrasing, or normalising, Milton's language. Thus, what Davis suggests in Shakespeare, we see operating here in Milton: When we attempt to normalise Milton's language, we are reducing the poem's irreducible language. Inevitably, we lose something in the process.

In his later article "The Shakespeared Brain," Davis (2008) makes clear what he thinks that something is, through a collaborative study he conducted with colleagues in neurology. In it, they measured the neurological responses (through EEG, MEG, and fMRI scanners) of student subjects exposed to four different but related sentences (p. 3):

> (A) I was not supposed to go there alone: you said you would accompany me.
>
> (B) I was not supposed to go there alone: you said you would charcoal me.
>
> (C) I was not supposed to go there alone: you said you would incubate me.
>
> (D) I was not supposed to go there alone: you said you would companion me.

Sentence (D) is a simulation of a Shakespearian anthimeria, or function shift, in which a word in the right semantic context is shifted from one part of speech to another (in this case, from a noun to a verb). Sentence (A) is its paraphrase, in which the anthimeria is stripped so that the semantic content is the same but the grammatical form is normalized. Sentences (B) and (C) are controls, where (B) is "wrong" (or ungrammatical) in both its semantic content and grammatical form, whereas (C) has the right form, but the wrong semantic content. The students were exposed to the sentences in random order, and their brains' distinct responses to each were recorded.

The results were astounding. The subjects' brains read Sentence (D)'s anthimeria differently not only from the totally ungrammatical Sentence (B), but also from its normalised paraphrase in Sentence (A). The brain sensors were arranged to record two measures: the N400 effect, triggered by a semantic violation; and the P600 effect, signalling a fault in grammatical structure. Sentence (B) produced both N400 (semantic) and P600 (grammatical) effects, while Sentence (C) produced only N400 (semantic) effects. Sentence (A) produced no N400 or P600 effects, as was to be expected, but Sentence (D) with its anthimeria triggered grammatical dissonance (P600), but still made semantic sense (no N400). As Davis puts it, "while the Shakespearian functional shift was semantically integrated with ease, it triggered a syntactic re-evaluation process likely to raise attention and give more weight to the sentence as a whole" (p. 4). Because the brain would have to create a new pathway to reconcile the anthimeria's conflicting semantic and grammatical signals (note that Sentence [C]

was summarily dismissed by the brain as nonsensical, i.e., only a N400 effect), Davis concludes "that Shakespeare's syntax, its shifts and movements, can lock into the existing pathways of the brain and actually move and change them—away from old and aging mental habits and easy long-established sequences" (p. 4). Sentence (A), the "right" sentence, is as much one of those "easy long-established sequences" as the "wrong" Sentences (B) and (C), so when we paraphrase one of Shakespeare's anthimeriae, we are essentially transforming Sentence (D) into Sentence (A); In other words, we are sacrificing the potentially new neural pathways opened up by the original line for the old, easy, expected routes of the paraphrase.

As with Shakespeare, so too with Milton. Although Davis's study examines anthimeria, properly a shift in word choice (paradigm), not word order (syntax), there is no reason to suppose that a similar study could not be constructed to test one of Milton's anastrophes. What is important for the moment, however, is that Davis's study does lend support to the proposition that deviations in word choice or word order are not interchangeable with their normative cognates. Whether these deviations carry more "weight," create "new" neural pathways, or convey extra expressive content, all three are functions only of the original line, functions that are neutralised when we transform the original into a "naturalised" or "normalised" paraphrase or Deep Structure.

This study takes as its central metaphor the mosaic. Within this conceptual framework, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is conceived of as an arrangement of words laid out as a series of coloured tiles, or tesserae. Recalling Lewis's "fluid" syntax,

we see that these tiles can be dropped and cemented into place in "any order" the poet chooses "in some degree." This latitude in placement is more "free" in comparison to the "fixed," "clear," and "expected" order of a uniformly analytical SVO, the base-generated Deep Structures of Transformational Grammar. However, the value of Milton's deviations, his Topicalisations, is not to be measured solely in these terms—freedom for its own sake, rebellion against the analytical, liberation from the tyranny of Deep Structure—but rather, in the expressive content, or image, that emerges in our mind's eye when we step back from the comparatively fragmented Surface. It is in the gaps between the tiles that these new neural pathways, this added weight, the emphasis of the anastrophe, this extra expressive content, take form.

In the chapters that follow, we will attempt to elaborate on how these Topicalisations reveal their unique expressive content in a number of different contexts. In Chapter 3, "The Golden Tesserae: James Buchanan, The Latin Precedent, and Milton's `Pyrrha Ode,'" we will examine some of the historical and literary preconditions that set the stage for Milton's mosaic Topicalisations in *Paradise Lost*. In Chapter 4, "'Th'Omnific Word': Syntax, Performance, and Accommodation in Divine Speech," we will look at how such Topicalisations figure into the Miltonic performative language of Angela Esterhammer (1994), the God-talk of Thomas Merrill (1986), and the theological grammar of Victoria Silver (2001). Chapter 5, "A Catalogue of Inversions: Synthetic Pictures, Pronouns, and False Persuasion in a Worldly Language," will analyse examples of expressive Topicalisations by the narrator, Adam and Eve, and Satan in their

respective contexts. Finally, Chapter 6, "Sound and Vision: Speculations on Pragmatics and Milton's Conceptual Syntagmatics," will attempt to show how these Topicalisations influence our reading of the poem, both visually and aurally.

Throughout, we will hold fast to the lessons uncovered in this chapter through its application of Lewis's overall argument to Pound's example but within the functional framework of Transformational Grammar. We will not cement over the gaps in *Paradise Lost*'s tesserae or pluck them out and rearrange them into "normalised" paraphrases. We will not domesticate the "whitewater" of the poem's "syntax backward running," by making it run forwards instead. We will not distil down *Paradise Lost*'s fragmented Surfaces into "expected" Deep Structures, and stop there. We will not ignore the Deep Structure of *Paradise Lost*, but neither will we privilege it. Instead, we will contrast the de-Topicalised Depth against the Topicalised Surface as a way to isolate the expressive work being done by the original. I believe that Milton's Topicalisations in *Paradise Lost*—his "syntax backward running," his fragmented word mosaics—have their own unique story to tell, and it is through this method that I hope to tell it.

Chapter Three

The Golden Tesserae: James Buchanan, the Latin Precedent, and Milton's "Pyrrha Ode"

James Buchanan will never go down in the annals of Miltonic criticism as one of the more influential editors of *Paradise Lost*. Of his posthumously published edition of the poem's first six books, Ants Oras (1967) is dismissive—"Of Buchanan's and Wesley's editions little need be said" (p. 17)—and then outright condemnatory: "Many of the notes that are of any interest are adaptations or even positive plagiarisms" (p. 265). To be fair, we must keep in mind that as a schoolmaster and grammarian, Buchanan never intended his work for higher academia. As he (1773) makes clear on his title page, the edition is "Designed For the Use of our most eminent Schools, and of private Gentlemen and Ladies; and also of Foreigners of Distinction, who would read this admirable Poem with Understanding and Taste." Why eighteenth-century students, gentlemen, ladies, and foreigners would need Buchanan's edition as a guide to reading Milton's epic in the first place illustrates a conceptual shift in our expectations for English syntax, a shift that occurred in the eighteenth century and that still colours our perceptions today.

Jack Lynch (2000) places Buchanan's edition amongst a series of eighteenth-century adaptations of the poem: Howard's 1738 verse paraphrase of the first book, George Green Smith's prose paraphrases in 1745 and 1756, along with musical adaptations, such as Stillingfleet's oratorio based on the epic in 1760 (pp. 403–04). Such adaptations, according to Lynch, imply a "translation from the

idiom of one age to another, and its defining characteristic is the negotiation of the distance between the two" (p. 404). From this, he concludes that "adaptation is to ages what translation is to language" (p. 404), and so, if Buchanan and others like him felt the need to adapt *Paradise Lost* to reach an eighteenth-century audience, then there must be a difference between Milton's era and theirs. From the standpoint of literary periodisation, then, Lynch sees Milton as standing "on the fault line between the two ages" (p. 401) of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. From the standpoint of language, however, Buchanan's edition can also tell us more specifically how the eighteenth century saw its idiom differing from Milton's. Thus, Buchanan's edition is evidence for *Paradise Lost* standing also on a linguistic fault line between the two periods, at least from the perspective of the Enlightenment grammarians.

So what exactly does Buchanan do to the text? The long title to his edition, as Oras (1967) notes, makes his method sufficiently clear (p. 265): *The First Six Books of Milton's* Paradise Lost; *Rendered into Grammatical Construction*; *The Words of the Text being arranged, at the bottom of each Page, in the same natural Order with the Conceptions of the mind.*[1] In practice, the edition reads like a whole-scale rewrite of the poem by Ezra Pound. For example, God's declaration of the Son's anointment:

> your head I him appoint;
> And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
> All knees in heav'n, and shall confess him Lord:
> Under his great vice-regent reign abide

United as one individual soul,

For ever happy: Him who disobeys

Me disobeys. (5.606–12)

becomes:

I appoint him your head,

and have sworn by myself, that all knees

in heaven shall bow to him, and shall confess

him Lord: Abide united under his great

vice-regent reign as one individual,

for ever happy: Whoever disobeys him,

disobeys me. (p. 357)

Buchanan's version, then, stands not as a paraphrase proper, but rather as a reshuffling of Milton's synthetic sentence order, almost word for word, into its analytical equivalent.[2] In this way, his edition represents an answer key for Tyndall's grammatical mental exercises, or from a modern linguistic perspective, a de-Topicalisation of Milton's inverted Surface Structures into their base-generated Depths. In this sense, Pound's (1934) "certain order" for a sentence to be clear in uninflected English (p. 50), Tyndall's (1868) "true grammatical structure" (p. 101), and Transformational Grammar's "expected" Deep Structures are all relatives of "the same natural Order" of Buchanan and the other eighteenth-century grammarians.[3]

The analytical quality of that order was not something that the eighteenth century invented, but its "naturalness" was. As Nist (1966) notes, although the syntax of Old English was still flexible enough, "thanks to its synthetic inflection system, to permit a three-one-two positioning [OSV] or a three-two-one [OVS] without any sense of word-order violation" (p. 127), the prevalence of analytical word order in Old English syntax shows that the OE prose style had already many "modern" overtones by the year 1000 CE (p. 125). As a result, "The far more synthetic syntax of poetic license could be looked upon as an archaic oddity" (p. 125). The grammarians of Buchanan's time, however, did not see the difference in historical terms. Instead, analytical syntax was the "natural Order," measured not by historical or social contingencies, but rather by the universals of the "Conceptions of the mind." Buchanan makes the ahistorical and frankly, ethnocentric, aspects of this measurement clear, when in *A Regular English Syntax* (1767), he distinguishes English from Latin syntax: "The Order of Words in a Sentence is either natural or artificial. A Latin Sentence may be resolved from its artificial or inverted Order into its natural Order, corresponding with the natural Order of the English" (pp. xii–xiii); in other words, the "natural" order of even a foreign language like Latin corresponds to the "natural" order of English. Thus, to Buchanan's mind, he was not modernizing *Paradise Lost*, but rather bringing it into conformity with what he and others saw as the "proper" order of all human thought, and coincidently, this "natural" order corresponded to English analytical thought.

That this order was aligned to the way the human mind naturally works Buchanan makes clear by connecting that order to the way meaning is generated, period. In both his *British Grammar* (1762, n.1, p. 184) and his later *Regular English Syntax* (1767, p. 49), he contrasts a synthetic, or artificial, version of a sentence with its "natural" equivalent:

> I say in proper Order, because as Letters and Syllables would serve no Purpose, but remain entirely insignificant till properly combined into Words; so Words can convey no clear Idea nor perfect Meaning, till properly joined or ordered in Sentences: As, My of Diligence Reward a as Apple Master the me an gave. Here are Words joined, but they convey no Idea, till joined according to Propriety, thus: The Master gave me an Apple, as a Reward of my Diligence.

Without the proper joining of words into their natural analytical order, such words "convey no Idea," and like scrambled letters, they "remain entirely insignificant"; they do not signify until they are resolved into their meaningful, natural, analytical equivalent. Thus, "Resolution in any Language is the unfolding of a Sentence, and placing all the Parts of it, whether expressed or understood, in their proper and natural Order, that the true Meaning of it may appear" (*Regular*, 1767, p. xii). Milton's *Paradise Lost* is not as radically artificial as Buchanan's example here, but the epic does contain enough transpositions to move Buchanan to declare in his edition (1773) that "Milton's stile is more violently inverted than that of any other English poet" (p. 2). Buchanan's edition, then, stands as a

resolution of the poem's artificial syntax, and so, its overall intent is to move the lines towards a more "natural," "clear," and "perfect" state of signification.

The cost of that movement, according to Oras (1967), is Buchanan's whole-scale abandonment of the poet's voice: "The editor apparently does not understand that Milton's ellipses and peculiar word-order constitute two of the main characteristics of his language and cannot be abolished without affecting the personal idiosyncrasy of his style" (p. 265). Note here, however, that even for Oras, Milton's word-order is "peculiar," his style "personal" and idiosyncratic. In this way, Oras does not directly address Buchanan's claim that his resolution of the poem leads to a beneficial increase in our comprehension of each line's meaning. In the process, Oras manages instead to suggest that Milton's style is deviant or eccentric. What Oras is really arguing for, then, counter to Buchanan, is a sacrifice of an increase in meaning for the sake of Milton's personal style or diction. In the end, Milton's inversions are not really that meaningful or significant to Oras beyond their adjunct function as a separate medium for the transmittal of Milton's peculiar, personal, and idiosyncratic voice as an individual, and as a poet, down through the ages.

Oras's emphasis on the peculiar, personal, and idiosyncratic qualities of Milton's syntax, however, contradicts what Milton himself had to say about his epic project years before he began it. In his oft-quoted statements in *The Reason of Church Government* about his own future epic enterprise, Milton (1642) sets out his objective:

> ...not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end, that were a toilsome vanity, but to be the interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. (Hughes, 1957, p. 668)

Thus, for Milton, there are two possible ends for "the adorning" of one's "native tongue." The first involves the making of "verbal curiosities," and it is in this category that we may place Oras's peculiar, idiosyncratic, and personal style, because it has no content to convey other than itself. In short, the very style that Oras seeks to praise would be a "toilsome vanity" to Milton. The second type of adornment involves interpreting or relating "the best and sagest things," adornment as a means to transmit a content or meaning extrinsic to style alone. Because Milton makes clear that his objective is the second kind of adornment, rather than the first, Buchanan's rendering or resolution of the epic's adorning transpositions would constitute not a sacrifice of style for meaning, but rather of a greater for a lesser degree of meaning. In other words, if syntactical transpositions are meaningful, then Buchanan's removal of them in his edition of *Paradise Lost* would reduce the poem's meaning, not increase it, as Buchanan intends. This meaningful reduction would be a far more damning violation of the poem than Oras, or most twentieth-century Miltonists, recognize.

All this depends, of course, on whether transpositions can be meaningful. Classical Latin scholars over the years have noted instances where they see just such a parallel between the syntax of a specific line of poetry and its expressive content, although as Donald Lateiner (1990) states, it remains a "rarely remarked phenomenon" (p. 204) and "No extended consideration of this facet of Latin poetic technique has appeared" (p. 207). The most widely cited example comes from A.M. Young's short article "Pictorial Arrangement of Words in Vergil" from the *American Philological Association's Proceedings of 1933*. In Book IX of the *Aeniad*, "Rhoetus crouches in craven fear behind a great wine-bowl":

sed *magnum* metuens **se** post *cratera* tegebat

[italics and boldface mine]

According to Young, Vergil's word order here shows "the reader just that picture [of the scene] by hiding away Rhoetus, represented by the little word *se* (he could be no smaller), in the middle of the verse completely protected by the great wine-bowl" (p. li). Just as Rhoetus attempts to hide himself behind the great bowl, Vergil hides the very word *himself* (**se**) between the intervening words *great* (*magnum*) and *bowl* (*cratera*): The synthetic inverted syntax provides a picture of what the words themselves mean semantically.

L.P. Wilkinson (1963) in his *Golden Latin Artistry* displays the difficulty of expressing the technique in English when he provides an analytical translation of the line: "but for fear [Rhoetus] was hiding himself behind a large bowl" (p.66). Wilkinson's translation attempts to preserve the original line's placement

of Rhoetus's small self in the middle of the line, but he still must deviate from the literal synthetic word order, to avoid producing gibberish:

but *huge* for fear **himself** behind a *bowl* was hiding

It is here in the purely literal translation that we find the equivalent of Buchanan's artificial synthetic Latin syntax producing "no clear Idea nor perfect Meaning" according to the natural analytical "Conceptions of the mind." Buchanan's response would be to resolve the original line, as he does with Milton's text. In fact, Buchanan makes clear that the same principle applies to both Milton's artificial English and artificial Latin when in the "Advertisement" of his edition, he takes the Latin passage "Ego vobis regnum trado firmum" and resolves it into "Ego trado vobis regnum firmum" (p. 8): The artificial Latin "I you a kingdom leave strong" becomes the natural "I leave you a kingdom strong." Such resolution would prove innocuous to the vast majority of Latin sentences, but if a sentence were to be of that rare subset that Lateiner, Wilkinson, and Young identify as "mimetic," "metaphorical," or "pictorial," then Buchanan's (and our) resolution of those lines would obliterate entirely that extra layer of signification: In short, the resolved line's syntax would be rendered pictureless, and so, it would mean less, not more.

The probability of Milton's being aware of these syntactical pictorial effects increases the wider their distribution within Latin literature. Young (1933) provides two more examples from the *Georgics* and states that "this same pictorial arrangement of words" can be found in the *Culex* and *Ciris*, but not in the *Moretum* or the *Aetna*.[4] From this, he concludes that "Since this practice of

depicting in the order of words something of the meaning of the verse is, by and large, peculiar to Vergil, it constitutes, as it were, a '*Vergilius fecit*,' a touchstone of his craft" (pp. li–lii). However, Wilkinson (1963) identifies the same technique in Lucretius, Horace, and Cicero,[5] and Lateiner (1990) sees mimetic syntax as so pervasive in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as to make it a key contributing factor to the poet's reputation as a syntactical "chartered libertine" and "a lord of language" (p. 207). Though Lateiner calls it only a "Partial Catalogue," he goes on to list numerous examples from the *Metamorphoses* broken into seven categories: Verse-position of Ordering Words; Juxtaposing and Separating; Enclosure, Concealing, and Imbrication; Balancing and Ordering Concepts; Enjambment as Fall, Eminence, or Return; Polysyllabic Acceleration; and Some Rare Effects (including Geographic, Numeric, and Confusing syntax). With such a wide distribution of what he calls "mimetic syntax" occurring outside Vergil, Lateiner is confident in dismissing Young's appropriation of the technique as a "*Vergilius fecit*" (p. 207).

Distribution, however, cuts both ways. If there are too few examples, then syntax reinforcing sense runs the risk of being reduced to "a fluke or a bright idea for one line" (Lateiner, 1990, p. 236), rather than a deliberate technique for Milton to follow and apply to English. Too many, and by occurring everywhere, mimetic syntax comes to exist nowhere, except in the critic's own mind: Just as Lateiner applies W. B. Stanford's note on onomatopoeia in Greek, "Certainly 'no sane literary critic would argue that prominent use of such letters [or word patterns] *always* has a deliberate mimetic motive'" (p. 206). Worse yet, if the

occurrence is so high as to become ubiquitous, then pictorial syntax becomes a side effect of the Latin language itself, and so reinstates the charge that in using it, Milton is imposing a feature native to Latin onto a language where it does not belong. Assembling his "Partial Catalogue," Lateiner walks this fine line by asserting both that the "Accumulation of examples should persuade the wary of the phenomenon's reality" and that "Context rather than frequency decides each case" (p. 206). Overall, through a "census of three typical books of the *Metamorphoses* (books 6, 8, and 10)," Lateiner finds examples of mimetic syntax in 4%, 2%, and 4% (respectively), with significant clusters appearing in the accounts of Arachne, Echo, Narcissus, and Apollo's slaughter of Niobe's sons, "enough to claim conscious deployment of this 'expressiveness'" (p. 236).

However empirical the percentages may appear, the argument is still vulnerable to an infinite series of quibbles over what constitutes a truly "significant" number. As Lateiner acknowledges, "Even friendly readers may wonder how high a percentage is necessary before one identifies a tendency to use a word in a specified position, or indeed may ask whether some of the examples represent significant frequencies, rather than a random scattering" (p. 206). For some, 4% is sufficient to prove the point; for others, it is not enough. Further, if 4% is the "significant" value, then 2% falls short. No matter what the percentages, one man's significance is another man's random occurrence, and so this particular numbers game could potentially go on forever. Because such instances of syntax mirroring sense are by their nature so localized and context dependent, it is difficult for any statistic to capture their full import: The lower their frequency,

the more significant the effect should become, as long as it does not appear only in one line, in one poem, by one poet. These same shortfalls in a purely statistical method would also operate in any wholesale quantitative analysis of such syntactical effects within the entire text of *Paradise Lost*.

Paradoxically, the case for syntax representing sense as a technique in Latin is strongest when we look at where it does not appear. Thus, while instances of syntactical picturing occur in Vergil, Lucretius, Horace, Cicero, and Ovid, Lateiner can confidently assert that "Greek poets before Callimachas, Simmias, and Apollonius, with a language of comparable syntactic possibilities, rarely exploit word-position and line arrangement" (p. 206). Further, since such syntactic features depend so thoroughly on "verse boundaries, caesura, enjambment, and other rhythmic features," they remain "a technique that does not occur so often or effectively in Latin prose" (p. 237). Finally, "Languages with a relatively fixed word-order do not enjoy Latin's syntactical flexibility" (p. 237), and so syntactic mirroring remains, according to Lateiner, "a resource barely available in English" (p. 206). It is in that word *barely* that space exists for a Miltonic use of expressive syntax in English.

There is a second line through which Milton may have been exposed to Latin's syntactical possibilities, but here, the effect is formal, rather than expressive. J. W. Mackail (1895) uses a suggestive metaphor that opens up a new perspective on Latin syntax in his praise of Horace: "his vivid and clearly-cut descriptions of nature in single lines and phrases stand out by themselves like golden tesserae in a mosaic, each distinct in a glittering atmosphere" (p. 114).

Although the emphasis here is on "single lines and phrases," Mackail's description of Horace's "unique power of compression" contains the root of the mosaic metaphor: It "is not that of the poet who suddenly flashes out in a golden phrase, but more akin to the art of the distiller who imprisons an essence, or the gem-engraver working by minute touches on a fragment of translucent stone" (p.114). Whether it be at the level of the line, the phrase, or the word, it is these "translucent" stones, or tesserae, that are arranged to form the complete "glittering atmosphere" of the poem's overall image. The differences here in Mackail's praise from pictorial syntax are merely ones of scale, not of kind, or technique.

Donald Lateiner (1990) makes the connection across this gap in scale explicit when he translates the following passage from Horace's *Ars Poetica* through the prism of pictorial syntax:

> hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor.
> in verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis
> dixeris egregie, *notum* si **callida** *verbum*
> reddiderit **iunctura** *novum.* (45–48)

"Subtle and careful let the budding poet be even in setting out his words. You've written it splendidly if by **cunning combination or placement** you make a *tired word* once again *new*."[6] According to Lateiner, "Horace's word-order illustrates the message. The lexical collocations, interweaving of words (*a***b***A***B***a*), and the disjunction of *novum* produce meaningful, extraordinary word-order and a final surprise" (p. 236). The picture behind the syntax, then, takes what is familiar or

customary (*notum*) at the beginning, passes it through the process of cunning combination (**callida** *verbum*/reddiderit **iunctura**), and produces its new (*novum*) version at the end: The word that is tired before the cunning combination is made new again after it. The extreme care with which these word-tesserae are placed to produce such a syntactic picture is enough, especially within the same work, to transform the *Ars Poetica*'s famous dictum "ut pictura poesis" (as is a picture, so too is a poem) into "ut tessellatum opus poesis" (as is a mosaic, so too is a poem), at least at the level of technique. The basic compositional tenor is the same, even if the vehicles are different.

It is unlikely, however, that when Mackail was praising Horace's "golden tesserae," he was referring to Lateiner's pictorial syntax, and it is here that we find the second line of Milton's probable exposure to Latin synthetic effects. By contrasting the more flamboyant "golden" phrases of others to Horace's tesserae, Mackail is actually referencing another species of synthetic Latin composition, the Golden Line. Lateiner (1990) is very careful to distinguish this form from his pictorial one: "Other critics have studied 'schematicized word-order' in Latin, but they generally investigate formal patterning, 'golden lines' and such, not functional positioning, the matching of sense to the physical arrangement of words" (p. 207). His dismissal of "Golden Lines" as merely "formal patterning" is understandable, given the limited scope and objectives of an article, but the similarities between the two are suggestive of the linguistic synthetic substratum necessary for both to flourish.

Wilkinson (1963) defines the Golden Line as one "in which the epithets and nouns appear in the corresponding order, that is, a b C A B" (p. 215), where aA and bB are the corresponding adjective-noun pairs, linked by their inflected endings, and C is the verb. Lateiner's apt distinction between the "formal" Golden Line and its functional, or expressive, counterpart can be illustrated if we juxtapose an original Golden Line in Vergil's *Aeneid* (4.139) and its pictorial equivalent:

> *aurea* **purpuream** subnectit *fibula* **vestem**[7]
>
> (*gold* **purple** bound *clasp* **cloak**)

Here the gold clasp binds the purple cloak, but the alternating sequence of the adjectives and nouns generates no real additional pictorial content, unless the clasp is interwoven through the cloak, an image that the context does not support. The line is purely golden and therefore purely formal, grammatical, and prosodic.

By contrast, if we rearrange the line into a hypothetically pictorial variant, then we get the following:

> **purpuream** *aurea* subnectit *fibula* **vestem**
>
> (**purple** *gold* bound *clasp* **cloak**)

Leaving aside the issue of scansion, we see that now the gold clasp is clustered in the centre with its verb, surrounded by the purple cloak. Although this arrangement is a plausible example of a pictorial syntax, its deviation from the strict golden rule disqualifies it. As Wilkinson states, "The chiastic form a b C B A (shall we call it the 'Silver Line', since it is not quite so absolute?) can also be

used in this way" (p. 216). While I disagree with Wilkinson on the chiastic character of the line (strictly speaking, the two noun-adjective pairs would have to be semantic, not merely inflectional, opposites for that rhetorical scheme to apply), his dividing line between the "Golden" and the "Silver" line still holds.[8]

The major stumbling block to the Golden Line, however, and this limitation is especially pertinent to our examination of expressive syntax in *Paradise Lost*, is that no one is absolutely sure it exists. As with pictorial syntax, no Classical Latin poet, whether in the Early, Gold, Silver, or Late periods, ever mentions the Golden Line. It first appears as the *teres versus* in Diomedes Grammaticus's (circa 450 CE) *Ars grammatica*, and from there, runs through various permutations in praise and terminology up to the Renaissance, and beyond: the Venerable Bede's *De arte metrica* (circa 700 CE) "the best and most beautiful arrangement"; Jacob Wimpfeling's (1484) *De arte metricandi* "a mark of extraordinary beauty"; Conrad Celtes' (1486) *Ars versificandi* "the most charming form of poem"; Johannes Despauterius's (1512) *Ars versificatoria*, elegiac poetry "rejoices" in it, and "Nor is it inelegant in other genres"; John Clarke's (1633) *Manu-ductio ad artem carmifiam sue dux poeticus*; and Edward Burles' (1652) *Grammatica burlesa*. Despite the extensiveness of these subsequent references, however, the Golden Line can never quite escape that zone of silence in the historical record: The debate merely shifts from whether the Golden Line exists to whether it is the conscious product of Latin literary critics after the fact, rather than of the Latin poet in the heat of the contemporary compositional moment.

The response from modern Latin critics has been to attack this argumentative gap with line counts and statistics. Young (1932) identifies 16 Golden Lines in *Catullus 64*, 39 in Vergil's *Ecologues*, 47 in his *Georgics*, and 66 in the *Aeneid* (p. 517). More recently, Mayer (2002) constructs exhaustive tables calculating the percentages of Golden, Silver, and Gold and Silver lines (pp. 139–79) in Classical, Late Antique, and Early Medieval poetry. He, too, finds 4.41% Golden Lines in *Catullus 64*, 1.81% in the *Ecologues*, between 2.03 in Book 2 and 0.88% in Book 4 of the *Georgics*, and only 0.34% in the *Aeneid* (although we must remember that that low percentage still constitutes 34 Golden Lines out of a total of 9,896). Beyond Young, Mayer also discovers 4.35% in the *Culex* and 4.99% in the *Ciris*,[9] 0.35% in Horace's *Satires & Epistles*, 1.05% in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1.46% in Lucan, 0.92 in Persius, between 0.28 (in Book 3) and 1.08% (in Book 2) in Statius's *Thebaid*, between 4.27 (*On Hororius's Third Consulship*) and 0.97% (in *Eutropium* 1) in Claudian, and 3.73% in Ausonius's *Mosella*. The numbers here may seem impressive, but I should note they are only a selection of Mayer's full analysis and they do not include his extensive lists of Early Medieval poetry ranging from 0.77% in Corippus's *Iohannis* Book 8 to 11.54% in Ennodius's *In Natale*.

To penetrate through this swarm of numbers, I would like to concentrate on a few pertinent points. First, no Golden Line appears before Catullus, and so if it started somewhere, then it could conceivably have been discovered, even though no Latin poet ever documents that discovery. Second, if Golden Lines had appeared throughout the entire Latin continuum, then, as in the case of pictorial

syntax, it could be argued that they are a mere accident of the language and not a conscious choice. However, like pictorial syntax, they appear only in some works and not in others. Third, and most importantly, the statistics, though formidable, are not entirely unassailable. What Young sees as 16 Golden Lines in *Catullus 64*, Mayer sees as 18; Young's 39 in the *Ecologues* drops to Mayer's 15; Young's 47 in the *Georgics* becomes Mayer's 16; and finally, Young's 66 in the *Aeneid* drops nearly in half to Mayer's 34 (even combining Mayer's Golden and Silver lines, we still arrive at only 60). The smaller discrepancies in *Catullus 64* could be chalked up to counting errors, but the larger gaps point to a massive divergence in the standards of measurement: Because the numbers are so drastically different, we can conclude only that Mayer and Young must have significantly different criteria for what counts as a Golden Line.

These findings are relevant to the present study in four ways. One, because both the Golden Line and pictorial syntax depend upon the same synthetic dislocation of adjectives from their nouns, and subjects and direct objects from their verbs, then the evidence for Golden Lines increases the likelihood that Milton was aware of at least the potential for pictorial syntax: Evidence for knowledge of the first off-shoot (the Golden Line) provides direct evidence for knowledge of its linguistic root (synthetic syntax), and indirect evidence for knowledge of the second off-shoot (pictorial syntax). Two, by the circumstantial topic of similarity, if the Golden Line is possible, then pictorial syntax too is possible, because the only difference between them is that the former substitutes a strict grammatical form for the latter's picture-making function as its organising

principle. Three, if the frequency of the Golden Line is small, then the frequency of the pictorial line will be even smaller. It is categorically easier for someone to execute a purely formal technique than it is a context-dependent formal equivalent. A Golden Line can be used anywhere for any type of content (at least in Latin hexameter verse), whereas pictorial syntax works only where the context dictates. The former has three conditions for deployment (sequence, grammar, prosody); the latter has the same three, plus one; therefore, the latter will have the lower frequency. From this, we may conclude that though the Golden Line is hard, the pictorial line is harder to execute in Latin, and such a reduced frequency may make the latter nearly impossible to capture through statistical means. Four, because the Golden Line insists on a strict sequence of adjective 1, adjective 2, verb, noun 1, noun 2, it would be almost impossible to render intelligibly in a more analytical language, like English (except in the most radical and elliptical experimental poetry). Also, although some definitions of the Golden Line turn a blind eye to intervening prepositions, conjunctions, exclamations, and adverbs, the relatively freer sequence of pictorial syntax (context allowing) and its unfettered use of all the parts of speech as its material make it the more conducive of the two within an analytical environment. Thus, although the Golden Line is the easier of the two to use in Latin, pictorial syntax is really the only synthetic option in English.

So what evidence do we have that Milton knew of the Golden Line, and that if he did know of it, that he knew only its pictorial cousin would be a suitable candidate for adaptation to English epic verse? Again, the historical record stands

mute. However, we can say with a high degree of certainty that Milton was at least exposed to Golden Lines. Out of the Classical and Late Antique works cited above in Mayer's (2002) study, it should come as no surprise that all the works he analyses of Catullus, Horace, Vergil, Ovid, Persius, and Claudian are, according to Jackson Boswell's (1975) catalogue, "known to have been in Milton's library or to have been read by him" (p. xiii). Lucan is listed as "A possible or likely candidate for inclusion" (p. 160), whereas Statius's *Thebaid* and Ausonius's *Mosella* are listed as "doubtful" (p. 233, p. 20). In other words, Milton does refer to Statius and Ausonius in his works, but there is no direct or highly probable evidence that these books actually made it into Milton's personal collection.

But exposure does not constitute knowledge, just as breathing air does not equal knowing its chemical composition. Here is where another volume in Milton's collection and a personal connection enter the picture. According to Boswell (1975), Milton is known to have owned or read Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem*. On page 72 of that compendious 1561 catalogue of Latin poetical techniques, Scaliger lists what he calls a "teretes versus," a "smooth or well-rounded" verse. Citing a corrupted line from Vergil's *Ecologue* (2.50)[10] and adapting Diomedes Grammaticus's term, Scaliger illustrates the technique with what is clearly a Golden Line:

> *mollia* **luteola** pingens *vaccinia* **calta**
>
> ("Tender yellowish painting hyacinth marigold," or analytically, "painting the tender hyacinth a yellow marigold.")

What is more, though published eleven years after Milton's death, John Dryden's (1685) "Preface" to his *Sylvae* contains the most widely quoted and well-known English definition for "that Verse commonly which they call golden, or two Substantives and two Adjectives with a Verb betwixt them to keep the peace" (p. viii). The close personal, professional, and literary relationship between the two contemporaries increases the likelihood that what Dryden knew, Milton knew also.

All this would still remain circumstantial if it were not for a short comment Milton himself made before his translation of Horace's "Fifth Ode": "Rend'red almost word for word without Rhyme according to the Latin Measure, as near as the Language will permit" (p. 88). That last qualifier "as near as the [English] Language permits" can have two referents: Milton's word-for-word rendering and his approximation of Latin measure. I use the connective "and" here because I do not think it is an either/or case: The word-for-word rendering governs word choice and syntax—grammatical considerations—whereas the approximation of the Latin meter involves prosody. Although we tend to separate the two in our critical analysis, it is safe to say that for Milton, an English poet translating a Latin poem, the two would be inextricably tied together, and so both would be equally affected by what is permitted by the English language.

Reinstating our artificial division, on the other hand, we see that the Ode's later influence on prosody and grammar becomes asymmetrical. On the prosodic side, Milton's translation constitutes an original stanza form, an invention that, according to D. S. Carne-Ross (1996) in his "Introduction" to *Horace in English*,

would "have great influence on original poetry…but not, curiously enough, on Horatian translation" (p. 58). What this suggests is that in terms of prosody, the stanza form, though matching the Latin Ode's alternation of four long unrhymed couplets with four short ones, ended up being received as a better vehicle to deliver English, rather than Latin, content to an English audience. Here, there seems to be no limits imposed by the English language, and so Milton's adapted ode stanza moves smoothly into the English poetic repertoire. The transmission is so smooth, in fact, that the form comes to be known in English as a "Miltonic ode," not Milton's version of a Horatian ode.

On the grammatical side, the transition is not nearly so smooth. As Carne-Ross notes, "Milton's avoidance of rhyme has not caused displeasure, but his Latinisms have" (p. 58), and later, when Carne-Ross provides a specific example, a note of impatience rises in his voice:

> It is beside the point to complain that a line like "Who now enjoyes thee credulous, all Gold" [9] is more Latin than English. It is meant to be. To say that it is not comprehensible without the Latin is simply not true; it is perfectly clear in the context that "credulous" applies to the observer, "all Gold" to the person observed.
>
> (p. 58)

By countering the complaint that the line "is not comprehensible without the Latin," Carne-Ross is positing that the line is comprehensible through English alone, which is true: It *can* be read without any knowledge of the Latin original whatsoever. However, such a reading does take a lot of work: It is not "perfectly

clear," for if it were, then there would be no complaints to counter. Even as accomplished a Latinist as John K. Hale (1997) dismisses Milton's translation as gibberish: "English, forced into the Latin word-order, cannot make clear who is 'credulous' and who is 'amiable' nor what 'vacant' means. What inflection can clarify readily, English fails to: the syntax crumples into nonsense" (p. 71). The real issue, then, is not whether the fault lies in some readers (as Carne-Ross's frustrated tone suggests), nor whether there is some flaw in Milton's translation (he does translate the line almost word for word, except for the addition of "all"). The real issue is whether the line is *more* comprehensible with the Latin than without it. Such room for supplementation demonstrates that unlike the stanza form, the line Carne-Ross quotes has encountered a linguistic resistance of some sort in its transition from the Latin to the English, a point where, perhaps, the latter language will *not* permit.

To isolate this point of resistance, we should turn to the actual line in the original and to what Milton actually does with it. Milton's full translation is reproduced here from Merritt Y. Hughes (1957) edition of the *Complete Poems and Major Prose*:

> What slender Youth bedew'd with liquid odors
> Courts thee on Roses in some pleasant Cave,
> Pyrrha? for whom bind'st thou
> In wreaths thy golden Hair,
> Plain in thy neatness? O how oft shall he
> On Faith and changed Gods complain: and Seas

Rough with black winds and storms

Unwonted shall admire:

Who now enjoys thee credulous, all Gold;

Who always vacant, always amiable

Hopes thee; of flattering gales

Unmindful. Hapless they

To whom thou untried seem'st fair. Me in my vow'd

Picture the sacred wall declares t'have hung

My dank and dropping weeds

To the stern God of Sea.

The original line reads, "Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea," translated literally as "Who now you enjoys credulous gold" and which Milton translates as "Who now enjoys thee credulous, all Gold" (9). Milton transposes the object (you) and the verb (enjoys) to remove any uncertainty in English as to the subject and the object,[11] but he maintains what amounts to a misplaced modifier in analytical English when he keeps "credulous" hovering between the object and its objective modifier "gold." It is here where we encounter the readerly resistance that so frustrated Carne-Ross. But why did Milton remove one resistance, and not the other? The line could just as easily have read "Who credulous now enjoys thee, all Gold" with all its modifiers in their proper analytical positions and all analytical resistance removed.

The short answer is that Milton is following the original Latin word order "as near as the Language will permit," and in this light, the expected English

analytical syntax becomes a barrier that the translation hits, with "thee" making it successfully over the wall, while "credulous" is left mournfully behind. This scorecard of hits and misses can then be compared against other translations as a measure of Milton's success or failure. Carne-Ross, however, proposes a measure of success that substitutes this quantitative approach for a qualitative one: for him (and for Goethe), in the best translations, "the translator more or less abandons the genius of his own language and seeks to create something new, an amalgam of the foreign or alien and the native" (p. 57). Within this paradigm, the quantitative binary barrier becomes a qualitative semi-permeable membrane across which some features may pass, others may not, and still others may unite to create new forms. It is on this semi-permeable boundary that Carne-Ross places Milton's Horatian translation: "Translations of this kind are very rare in English and indeed there is only one example that can be considered successful, Milton's version of the Ode to Pyrrha" (p. 57). High praise indeed, but for it to be warranted, we need more specific examples of how Milton has created "something new," and of how that "amalgam of the foreign or alien and the native" works.

Could Milton's retention of "credulous" in its potentially off-putting unanalytical position be such a case? There is a semantic complexity generated by the original's word order that defies a quantitative binary analysis of a translation's "successful" word choices or sequences. In the original line, the pairing of the subject (*Qui*) and object (*te*) before the verb and the subjective (*credulus*) and objective (*aurea*) modifier pair after it achieve a symmetry that approaches but does not meet the strict criteria for a Golden Line. Pictorially, this

symmetry suggests that the verb is not only "keeping the peace," as Dryden might say; there is more content beyond the merely formal—more content, in fact, than a merely straight analytical translation can provide. Instead of a credulous observer enjoying a golden object, with the verb acting as almost a barrier between the two, the Latin synthetic line unites the subject and object before the verb, and it is through this verb that each becomes respectively credulous and golden. Rather than a strict linear and temporal sequence in which an already credulous subject acts on, and to some extent makes, a golden object, we get a more mutual simultaneous relationship: It is the subject's act of enjoyment itself that instantaneously transforms both himself and the object, Pyrrha, into their credulous and golden counterparts.

As we have already noted, and as Milton's transposition of "thee" and "enjoys" suggests, such quasi-golden manipulations of subject and object are nigh impossible to recreate in English, but does Milton's retention of "credulous" in the line's predicate attempt to take the subject, through its modifier, as far as "the Language will permit"? In his version, it is the credulity of the observing subject that inserts itself between "thee" and "all Gold." The original's quasi-golden simultaneity may be unattainable due to the limitations of analytical subjects and objects, but at least here the subject's belief can be interwoven with the object in the predicate, a mere shadow of the balanced unities of the original, granted, but without Milton's current position for "credulous," it is a nuance of meaning that would be instantly dispelled. Meanwhile, Milton's sequence of object, subjective modifier, objective modifier substitutes a new content for the original's loss: In

the heat of his enjoyment, the lover sees his loved one as "all Gold"; however, whether he knows it or not, it is really only his credulity that makes it so.

One side effect of Milton's placement of "credulous" in the predicate is the transformation of the modifier into both an adjective and an adverb simultaneously. As Janette Richardson (1962) notes, the transformation occurs "In a manner which sounds strange to English ears but which is typical of Virgil's style" (p. 325), and she quotes three examples from *Paradise Lost*: "thee I revisit safe" (3.21), "That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats/To chase me hence?" (6.287–88), and "Servant of God…who single has maintain'd/Against revolted multitudes the Cause/Of Truth" (6.29–32). Although Richardson sees the construction as a straight binary substitution of "an adjective for an adverb," the adjectival form still retains its adverbial quality: The epic narrator in Book III revisits the holy Light of his muse safely, and in so doing, he becomes safe within the safe glow of that "sovran vital Lamp" (3.22); Satan accuses Michael of hoping imperiously to drive his Adversary hence, and so, at least in Satan's mind, confirms the Archangel's own imperiousness; and Abdiel singly maintains his faith and so makes himself both literally and figurally singular in doing so.

In the "Pyrrha Ode," the youth is both credulous and enjoying credulously the golden fruits of his loved one—in the modifier's present position—but if it were moved to between "Who" and "now" or between "now" and "enjoys," it would function almost exclusively as an adjective. Such a shift would make the belief in the first sequence a precondition to the enjoyment ("Who [being someone] credulous now enjoys"), while in the second, the temporal adverb

"now" would be displaced away from the enjoyment towards the believing ("Who now credulous [he wasn't before] enjoys"). Further, Milton's actual position achieves what Richardson describes as "an unexpected caesura" which "achieves almost the effect of a parenthetical afterthought" (p. 325). Such unexpectedness reinforces the "Unwonted" nature of Pyrrha's inevitable "Seas/Rough with black winds and storms" (6–8), which the narrator has thankfully survived ("Me in my vow'd/Picture the sacred wall declares t'have hung/My dank and dropping weeds" [13–15]), but the youth knows not ("Hapless they/To whom thou untried seem'st fair" [12–13]). This kind of double-vision, the dramatic irony at the heart of Horace's version, as both J. W. Mackail (1921) and Ernest A. Fredricksmeyer (1965) have noted in their explications of the Latin, is a delicate thing. The narrator both knows the Youth's future fate and yet sympathizes with his present blissful ignorance; the narrator too has been there, and partly yearns to be there again.

Thus, within this larger context of the ode itself, and Horace's original, the micro-effects generated by the misplacement of "credulous" have amplified consequences. If the Youth's credulity is emphasized too much in line 9, then he loses that note of sympathy and the narrator becomes merely a didactic (and potentially bitter) figure who deliberately chooses to leave the Youth to the romantic shipwreck that is about to happen. With the proper balance struck in the word's placement, on the other hand, the narrator understands the overwhelming power of the Youth's credulous self-delusion: He knows it can seem to transform Pyrrha to gold, but he also knows such belief would render any warning he could

give mute. In the throes of such enjoyment, who would believe anyone's claim that such solid gold could suddenly turn into galeful black? The transfer of such subtle nuances from the original into the translation, though not seamless, would count as one of Carne-Ross's qualitative signs that Milton has successfully abandoned "the genius of his own language" and created "something new."

The transformative quality of Milton's placement of the word *credulous* in his translation of the "Pyrrha Ode" makes it an ideal vehicle for a similar transformation in *Paradise Lost*. In Book I, the narrator describes the Fallen Angels' corruption of fallen humanity throughout history:

> By falsities and lies the greatest part
> Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
> God their Creator, and th'invisible
> Glory of him that made them to transform
> Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
> With gay religions full of pomp and gold
> And devils to adore for deities.
>
> (366–73)

The passage is highly inverted against the analytical standards of Buchanan's (and our) "natural" English, but Milton's artificial arrangement sets up a pattern of one thing being transformed into another through synthetic syntax. In the first instance, the displacement of the direct object, "the greatest part of mankind," before the subject and verb, "they corrupted," distances it from the object of the infinitive, "God their Creator": Syntactically as well as semantically, the devils'

corruption, with its suggestion *to forsake*, comes between *mankind* and *God*. In a sense, the syntax presents the devils as a wedge between God and Man. From there, the second infinitive object "th'invisible/Glory" is shifted to before "to transform," followed by the prepositional phrase "to the image of brute." The result is a synthetic patterning where God's invisible glory moves through the transforming power of the infinitive into brute images with all their "gay religions full of pomp and gold." Finally, the "devils" are transformed into "deities," through the intervening agency to mankind's false adoration, within the synthetic patterning of infinitive object ("devils"), infinitive ("to adore"), prepositional phrase ("for deities").

It should come as no surprise that Buchanan "resolves" this passage into its "natural" analytical equivalents:

> They corrupted the greatest part of mankind,
> By falsities and lies, to forsake their creator,
> And oft to transform the invisible glory of him
> That made them to the image of a brute,
> And to adore devils for deities, adorned
> With gay religions, and full of pomp and gold.
>
> (p. 51)

In Buchanan's world, subjects precede verbs followed by objects ("They corrupted the greater part…to forsake their creator") and objects follow infinitives followed by prepositional phrases ("to transform the invisible glory…to the image of a brute" and "to adore devils for deities"). In this purely analytical world, all

synthetic syntactical nuances are stripped away. The loss is not merely stylistic, but expressive. Buchanan's rendering of *Paradise Lost* "into Grammatical Construction" is not Milton's rendering of Horace's Latin "Pyrrha Ode" into English "as near as the Language will permit." Whereas Milton's translation attempts to preserve Horace's golden tesserae by substituting an English synthetic syntax for Horace's Latin one, Buchanan's rendering of *Paradise Lost* turns Milton's synthetic golden tesserae into analytical lead.

Sometimes for an innovation to occur, what is required is for someone to step across a line that everyone but he can see.[12] The boundary between Latin and English syntax has, in Miltonic criticism, been just such a line, but is its barrier-like impermeability an inherent feature of our language or merely a by-product of our own preconceptions about language?

It is telling in this respect that in his *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* (1669), Milton mentions "Syntaxis" three times, and not once does he refer to word order. In the preface "To the Reader," he says, "Of figurate Construction what is useful is digested into several Rules of *Syntaxis*: and *Prosodie*, after this *Grammar* well learnt, will not need to be Englisht for him who hath a mind to read it" (p. ii). Thus, Milton will not be going into exhaustive lists of rhetorical figures and poetical devices (as Scaliger does in his *Poetices*), but will instead distil what is essential to the present use; prosody, the reader can explore for himself once these essential tools are realized. At the beginning of the *Accedence* itself, Milton supplies his initial divisio of the subject: "*Grammar* hath two Parts:

Right-wording, usually call'd *Etymologie*; and right-joyning of words, or *Syntaxis*" (p. 1). Here, from our modern analytical perspective, we may think that "right-joyning" would entail word order, but in the second part of the grammar, dedicated to Syntaxis, we find that "Syntaxis" is synonymous with "Construction," and that what we think of as construction—sentence construction, word order—is very different from what Milton thinks it is:

> Now followeth *Syntaxis* or *Construction*, which is the right joining of these parts together in a Sentence.
>
> Construction consisteth either in the agreement of words together in Number, Gender, Case, and Person, which is call'd Concord; or the governing of one the other in such Case or Mood as is to follow. (p. 41)

Thus, for Milton, syntax involves the correct matching of appropriate word endings, an agreement in inflection, not a correspondence to a standard analytical sequence. By contrast, Buchanan, in both his *British Grammar* (1762, p. 2) and *Regular English Syntax* (1767, p. 49) defines *Syntax* as "the right *placing* and joining of Words together in Sentences" (emphasis mine).

Now we must remember that Milton is writing a *Latin* grammar, whereas Buchanan is writing an English one, but still, when we consider that *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* was written for an English audience "and in the English Tongue" (p. i), some mention of the difference between the two conceptions of syntax would conceivably help to make "the long way…much abbreviated, and

the labour of understanding much more easie" (p. i).[13] This omission could be a mere flaw in Milton's textbook, a flaw which Buchanan's later grammars seek to rectify, or it could be the symptom of larger cultural and linguistic conditions separating the two. Murray Cohen (1977) in his analysis of grammar textbooks in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, *Sensible Words*: *Linguistic Practice in England 1640–1785*, identifies just such a pre-existing condition at work in Milton's time:

> In all cases the decisive step is to clarify the elementary connection between language and things, as [Cave] Beck does when he assigns numbers to words, or as Commenius does when he brings every thing and notion to view. Equally true of each system is the idea that language builds from its meaningful elements and that such linguistic accretion amounts to syntax. (p. 26)

These are English grammars Cohen is citing here, not Latin. According to Cohen, it is not until after Milton's death that we begin to see—through the work of Buchanan and others—the beginnings our modern conception of a uniformly analytical English syntax:

> The shift in emphasis from words and their symbols to sentences and their parts occurs in the last quarter of the century when, primarily in response to the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (1660) of Antoine Arnauld and Claude Lancelot, masters of Port-Royal, English linguists exchange a philosophy of language based

> on correspondence of language to nature to one asserting the analogy of the function of speech to the operations of the mind. (pp. 26–27)

Thus, before Milton's death, we have an English syntax based on an accretion of individual words conceived of as things;[14] after his death, we start to shift towards one based on sentences and parts of speech conceived of as lines of thought. The overall linguistic shift, then, is from Milton's more synthetic conception of syntax to Buchanan's analytical one.

The full effect of such a conceptual linguistic shift on literature, Cohen (1997) leaves to future studies:

> The linguistic shift from things (or strictly referential ideas) to mental operations as the objects of words also has its literary and aesthetic corollary: the movement away from the imitation of objects to the representation of minds, from pictorialism to psychology….Recognizing in language texts these aspects of basic epistemological reorientation will allow us to see the literature of these years in terms of some distinctive features that have not often been reported in literary histories or in the responses to particular works. Such a comprehensiveness and close study of literary texts must await the work of many scholars, some of whom may be stimulated by this sort of close look at the techniques and theories of language study. (pp. 44–45)

For our purposes, *Paradise Lost* stands at a crucial liminal point—Lynch (2000) would call it a "fault line"—within this "basic epistemological reorientation." That Milton does not reference analytical syntax specifically in his short prefatory remark on his translation of Horace's "Pyrrha Ode" in 1626 as one of those markers where the English language does or does not permit says as much about Milton's placement within Cohen's epistemological continuum—and his distance from Buchanan and us—as it does about the poet's translational practice. The fact that Milton does not mention the limitations of analytical syntax in his *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* suggests that his place within that continuum has still not changed by 1669.

In short, Milton may have been able to cross the line between synthetic and analytical syntax, in that liminal zone between Latin and English, because to him, the line did not exist. His inverted word order in *Paradise Lost* could not be a "violation" because the syntactical rules governing, defining, and creating that violation did not yet exist. As Cohen (1977) states, seventeenth-century English grammarians had a wide range of views on the scope and difficulty of syntax: "The treatment of syntax in the seventeenth century ranges from Aickin's claim that English syntax can be 'absolved in three easie Rules' (A3) to James Howell's opinion, in *New English Grammar* (1662), that 'it cannot be in the compass of the human brain to compile an exact regular Syntaxis of the language'" (p. 26). By the late eighteenth century, Buchanan's *A Regular English Syntax* (1762) would provide fifteen rules and countless examples of "False Syntax." Milton's epistemological blindspot to these linguistic limits, then, may just have served as

the very precondition necessary for him to explore beyond them into an innovative potentiality latent in our own language, one that, paradoxically, we, operating from within those syntactical limits set by Buchanan and the other eighteenth-century grammarians, have yet to recognize. If we continue to see *Paradise Lost*'s inverted sentences through Buchanan's eighteenth-century eyes, then they will remain "unnatural" and "violent," but if we attempt to see them through Milton's seventeenth-century eyes, then his seemingly fractured tesserae may yet turn golden.

Notes

[1] The full title goes on "*and the Ellipsis properly supplied, without any Alteration in the Diction of the Poem.*" Although Oras (1967) does not supply any examples, he dismisses Buchanan's additions as not living up to this promise of fidelity to the diction (p. 265). Presumably, such additions would also eradicate any of the "sublime effects" Radner's thesis (1991) projects into the elliptical gaps between Milton's clauses.

[2] Buchanan's examples of his grammatical renderings include line breaks in his "Advertisement" (his Introduction), but the body of his text formats his interlineal resolutions at the bottom of each page as prose. Thus, the line breaks here are mine, both to show how closely Buchanan follows Milton's original text and to approximate Buchanan's line breaks in the "Advertisement."

[3] Sterling Andrus Leonard (1929), Bert Emsley (1933), and Murray Cohen (1977) all place Buchanan within the late eighteenth-century movement to "fix" the English language, in both senses of the word: "to make firm or stable" and "to mend or repair" (OED). Leonard (1929) locates Buchanan's work within the flood of English grammars from 1750–1800 mostly "concerned in whole or in part with solecisms, barbarisms, improprieties, and questions of precision" (p. 12). Emsley (1933) credits Buchanan with producing "perhaps the first English pronouncing dictionary" (p. 1156), his *Vera Pronunciatio* of 1757, but sees his grammatical works as "more eclectic than original" (p. 1159), representing the period's general "movement toward 'fixing' the language" (p. 1158). Drawing primarily from Buchanan's *Complete English Scholar* (1753) and his pronunciation dictionary, Cohen, meanwhile, classifies Buchanan as participating in the standardisation of the language for boys "who are to be put to Trades"—social and political, rather than theoretical, theological, or philosophical goals (p. 82). Buchanan's concern with language following "the Conceptions of the mind," however, would argue for his placement within Cohen's earlier period, the "Grammar of the Mind."

[4] A marginal note in the Ambrosian MS identifies the *Moretum* as Vergil's translation or imitation of an original poem by his Greek teacher, Parthenius (www.virgil.org/appendix/moretum.htm), and the *Aetna* is commonly regarded as the work of another "later, less-skilled poet" (www.isodore-of-sevilled.com/library-misc/aetna-1.htm). Thus, Young is surreptitiously making an argument that the *Culex* and *Ciris* are legitimate Vergilian works, whereas the *Moretum* and *Aetna* are not.

[5] In *De Rerum Natura*, IV.172, Lucretius mocks the skeptic as "qui capite ipse sua in statuit vestigia sese," which Wilkinson translates as he "who plants himself with his head in the place of his feet" (p. 65). Emphasizing the hyperbaton, an approximate synthetic version would run "*who* with his head *plants* in the place of his feet *himself*."

Horace's *Epode 13*, line 12, contains what Wilkinson sees as an alliterative picture of Achilles double nature: "invicte mortalis dea nate puer Thetide" ("unconquered, mortal goddess-born son of Thetis," p. 65).

Cicero, meanwhile, shows his contempt for hiding behind his public office when he tucks *himself* inside the public guard: "publico *me* praesidio" (*Oratio in Catilinam Prima*, 5.11).

[6] I've altered the font treatments in Lateiner's translation and commentary to make them consistent with his treatments in the original.

[7] Throughout, italics and boldface are added.

[8] The much-maligned *Wikipedia* has a very thorough, useful, and largely accurate overview of the "Golden Line" (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_line). In it, the "author" describes Wilkinson's "silver," and subsequent "bonze line," as "humorous" distinctions. Although Wilkinson's (1963) humour is difficult to detect within his deadpan delivery, the multiplying entities of the bronze line tend to bear *Wikipedia*'s author-function out: "Another form of hexameter (shall we call it the 'Bronze Line'?) is that framed by epithet and noun….Or a line can be framed by two verbs…or two participles…." (p. 217). Wilkinson ends with the bronze line bleeding into almost all rhetorical schemes, when he says, "But there are also similar figures of rhetoric, independent of lines, such as the [epanalepsis] or circle" (p. 217), and so we are left with a potentially infinite series of progressively devalued levels, akin to the slide of cultural ages (gold, silver, bronze, copper, brass, dark…) and the inverse of modern credit card designations (gold, platinum, titanium…).

[9] You will notice here that, though Young does not count Golden Lines in the *Culex* and the *Ciris*, Mayer does, and so adds support to Young's position that the two are true works of Vergil: Golden Lines and pictorial syntax are Vergilian touchstones; *Culex* and *Ciris* contain Golden Lines and pictorial syntax; therefore, the two works are, if not directly attributable to Vergil, then at least Vergilian.

[10] The line actually reads "mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha," but these textual corruptions do nothing to disqualify it as a Golden Line.

[11] Although the conventional use was *thou* (subject) and *thee* (object), *thee* was used for both subject and object positions in some dialects. The *thou* (singular) and *you* (plural), however, was as Leonard (1962) states "one of the few citations of a grammatical correction of usage previous to the eighteenth century" (p. 10).

[12] D. S. Carne-Ross (1996) in relation to Milton's translation of the "Pyrrha Ode" provides a caution to seeing Milton's work "in this experimental light," no matter how tempting that light may be:

> One must speak cautiously here since much depends on when [Milton's translation] was written. If early, perhaps in his later teens, then it may be that he was doing simply what he described himself as doing with no theoretical purpose in mind….If, however, this translation was written in his full maturity after he had studied the linguistic innovations carried out in early sixteenth-century Italy—which aimed at what amounts almost to a new language, Italian with Latin diction and syntax imposed on the native stock—then the Pyrrha Ode may be more ambitious than either its admirers or detractors have seen. (p. 57)

It is interesting to note here that Carne-Ross cautions against speculation and then proceeds to speculate, but what I take issue with is his assumptions that Milton could not have been innovative in his later teens (at the translation's suspected date of composition, 1626, Milton would have been 18), that he could only have discovered such innovations after having first studied the Italian precedents, and that application of a previously discovered technique is more ambitious than discovering the technique on one's own.

Within the realm of such cautious speculations, an alternative narrative of innovation would be just as viable: that in 1626, Milton experimented with Latin syntactic features in his translation of the "Pyrrha Ode," that from 1638 to 1639, during his Italian tour, he found his English experiments confirmed and mirrored in Italian developments, and that in 1667, he published the full application of the results in *Paradise Lost*. Both narratives have their virtues: for example, Carne-Ross's allows for a causal clarity with a clear chain of precedents leading from the simpler Ode to the more complex epic, whereas the alternative allows Milton 41 years to develop his experiments from the ode to the epic, as compared to Carne-Ross's 28 from the Italian tour to the epic.

What is important here is that the assumptions of one speculative narrative cannot ethically be used as the Procrustean measure by which to dismantle another; within the realm of speculation, all narratives are equally valid, and therefore, equally possible. The Italian experiments are one possible avenue of investigation that could shift one of these competing speculations to the level of conjecture. Did Ariosto, for example, also invert Italian word order to approach the synthetic qualities of Latin verse, and what would such an adaptation from Latin into Italian tell us about a similar adaptation from Latin into English?

[13] One of the differences Milton does recognize is in pronunciation, and on that point, he concedes defeat: "That of Grammar, touching Letters and Syllables, is omitted, as learnt before, and little different from the English Spelling-book; especially, since few will be perswaded to pronounce Latin otherwise then thir own English" (p. ii).

[14] Stephen K. Land (1974) identifies the same historical shift, but uses a different terminology: "More important than relativism, however, is the perception common to Vico, Smith, Condillac, Monboddo, and Herder that language grows not by accretion of signs but by structural modification, that language is therefore not a collection of words but a sign system" (p. 189). This "accretion of signs" allows for a sentence to be seen as an aggregate of words. Within this aggregate, they can be shifted around in position, and therefore, can admit of a synthetic syntax. These "Traditional studies of language and traditional logic took the word or term as the unit of consideration but eighteenth-century analyses of the structural formation of language opened the way to a view of the sentence or proposition as the true unit of discourse" (p. 190). In the age of Buchanan, the word became a sign within a system, and that system took the form of a "sentence or proposition," sentences and propositions whose syntax was inevitably, according to the "Conceptions of the mind," exclusively analytical.

Chapter Four

"Th'Omnific Word": Syntax, Performance, and Accommodation in Divine Speech

For Gillian Beer (1984), the Victorian scientist John Tyndall's "piercing through the involved and inverted sentences of *Paradise Lost*" leads to more than just mental exercise or delight. According to Beer, there is a relationship between his language training in reading the epic poem and his scientific work:

> We are told that John Tyndall had an extraordinarily developed mental awareness of relations in space, which helped to advance his work on radiation. That talent was trained by the language of Milton's epic of cosmic and syntactical spaces. (p. 41)

Thus, Beer sees in Tyndall's ability as a reader of *Paradise Lost* to link "the verb to its often distant nominative, of the relative to its transitive verb, of the preposition to the noun or pronoun which it governed, the study of variations in mood and tense, the transpositions often necessary to bring out the true grammatical structure of a sentence" the same mental operation that Tyndall employs in science, but using data and conceptual objects, such as molecules and other particles, as his building blocks, instead of words. Just as Tyndall rearranges the individual tiles of the epic's inverted sentences into their "true grammatical structure," he rearranges apparently jumbled, discrete, and disconnected scientific facts into their larger theoretical relations.

How this process works in Beer's estimation leads us to many of the same processes we have seen operating in and around the transposition of words in an inverted sentence. Beer provides an extended explication of how she sees such mental exercise operating:

> What Tyndall valued was the intensification of linguistic organization in a great writer, the pace of whose work plays off the syntax of the reading eye moving from line to line, against the energetic demands of meter, and against the act of rationalization implicit in the completed syntactical ordering of each sentence and verse paragraph. This complex multiple ordering in Milton's writing often includes a delay and accumulation so extreme that it rouses the reader's *attention* both to his own activity of syntactical speculation and to the writer's spatial organization of sense.
>
> (p. 41)

Milton's inverted sentences in *Paradise Lost*, then, constitute an "intensification of linguistic organization" different from everyday, analytical, denotative speech. The "complex multiple ordering" results in a heightening of the reader's "attention," and so yields insights into syntactical relationships and spatial organisations. This heightened attention is in keeping with the anastrophe's inversion of word order as a means to achieving emphasis. Throughout Tyndall's experiences reading *Paradise Lost*, there is a sense of discovery: The reader's activity of "piercing through" involved and inverted sentences produces

"speculations," and the writer's sense-making is seen in a novel relationship—spatially.

This sense of novelty recalls other accounts of the effects of the "intensification of linguistic organization." J. W. Mackail (1895), too, talks of Horace's "unique power of compression" in his use of words as "golden tesserae" placed within the mosaic of his poetic compositions (p. 114). Donald Lateiner (1990) links this compression, this intensification, specifically to the arrangement of those word-tesserae into synthetic, pictorial patterns when he sees in Horace's *Ars Poetica* the creation of "new" meanings (*novum*) for a "tired word" through its "cunning combination or placement" (*callida iunctura*) within a sentence. In Shakespeare's works, Phillip Davis (2008) sees poetic deviations from standard or expected grammar as triggering "a syntactic re-evaluation process likely to raise attention and give more weight to the sentence" (p. 4). This heightened attention, akin to that induced in Tyndall by *Paradise Lost*, "can lock into existing pathways of the brain and actually move and change them—away from old and aging mental habits and easy long-established sequences" (Davis, 2008, p. 4). Thus, Lateiner's "extraordinary word-order" of involved or inverted sentences in Horace and Ovid can potentially lead to the "final surprise" of new meanings, new speculations, new relationships, and from Davis's modern perspective of neural psycholinguistics, new connections in the brain. As in Ovid, Horace, and Shakespeare,[1] so too in Milton.

In her book *Imperfect Sense*: *The Predicament of Milton's Irony*, Victoria Silver (2001) outlines just such a new connection, but in a theological context.

Here, she outlines Luther's experience in the exegesis of a phrase from Romans 1:17: "For Luther himself, such an event [of spiritual crisis] was fomented by a phrase of Paul's—'the righteousness of God'—which he had been taught to understand as the righteousness by which deity punishes the wicked" (p. 21). Luther's crisis stems from this initial and traditional one-way interpretation of the phrase, where God's righteousness rains down upon the sinner, and since we all have sinned, that punishment seems inevitable, universal, and unavoidable. However, "just as that crisis has both grammatical and psychological symptoms,…so does its solution" (Silver, 2001, p. 21), and so, Luther uses a grammatical principle to untangle his spiritual despair triggered by a grammatical principle:

> The shift in his religious position is vast and almost beyond words, yet it is an interpretative creation, simultaneous with the sudden onset of the text's coherence and his own relief. For the received reading of Paul's phrase, in its semantic equation of words to things,[2] ignores a critical contingency in the text—"He who through faith is righteous shall live"—and the force of this contingency thoroughly reorders the sense of Romans, in keeping with a certain grammatical usage, the Hebrew genitive.
>
> (p. 22)

That genitive case results in the equivalent of a compound word in Hebrew,[3] so the literal translation would read "God-righteousness" in English. The "interpretative creation" that this grammatical case opens up is perhaps made

more clear when we examine the phrase, "the love of God." In English, this construction can be read in two senses: both "God's love" in the possessive—herein lies the traditional reading of Paul's phrase at the root of Luther's crisis—*and* "the love for God," in other words, God as the object of that love.

Luther's solution to his dilemma was to see the phrase "the righteousness of God" in both these senses simultaneously: God's righteousness for us and our righteousness for him. This reciprocal grammatical relationship, then, becomes something of a feedback loop when applied to spiritual practice, for God's righteousness now has the potential, if viewed correctly, to make us righteous towards him, and so, righteousness begets righteousness, when the reciprocity is recognized. It is a complex relationship compressed into one noun and a prepositional phrase, but by bringing grammar into relation with the traditional exegesis, Luther is able to unfold these multiple senses from the passage.[4] For him, the experience of this new connection, new relationship, new meaning is akin to that passage's becoming, in his words, "truly the gate to paradise" (qtd. in Silver, p. 22). Following Wittgenstein, Silver remarks, "what we have experienced is simply the 'new sensation' of another grammar—a new way of speaking or looking at our world and ourselves" (p. 24). If this type of "theological grammar," is able to produce this kind of expressive content at the level of the genitive, then might it not also generate similar expressive content at the level of an inverted or involved syntax?

Before we tackle this question, however, it is important to distinguish Silver's theological grammar from other attempts by Miltonists to tackle divine

speech in *Paradise Lost*. Whereas Silver, through Luther and Wittgenstein, suggests the possibility of a mutually supportive relationship between grammatical structures and theological content, Thomas Merrill's (1986) approach in *Epic God-Talk*: Paradise Lost *and the Grammar of Religious Language*, sees religious semantic content as always/already, by its very nature, in contention with grammar's logical strictures:

> whereas the normal syntactical entailments of ordinary language are founded upon "horizontal" relationships of cause and sequence, God-talk disdains such coherence by disruptively intruding a "vertical" anomaly—God's will. This anomaly does not overpower the authority of the horizontal entailment; it merely destabilizes it.
>
> (p. 13)

Here, the insertion of certain religious words along the "vertical" paradigmatic axis "destabilizes" the logical, linear, and temporal strictures of grammar's "horizontal" syntagmatic syntax, but this proposition assumes that analytical syntax is the only one there is; a synthetic syntax may still operate on the "horizontal" axis, but it remains flexible enough to express relationships that are not strictly linear, temporal, or logical. The limitations of a uniformly analytical SVO (he ate the cake) are not the same as the synthetic OSV (the cake he ate), OVS (the cake ate he), SOV (he the cake ate), VSO (ate he the cake), or VOS (ate the cake he). Thus, when Merrill outlines the inherent limitations of "ordinary" language, he takes that analytical syntax to be synonymous with all languages,

and to be always operating in English, but as we have seen in Chapters 2 and 3, there are syntactical alternatives both in other languages and in English itself.

Angela Esterhammer (1994) builds on Merrill's special semiotic function for such signifiers as "God" when she analyzes the Son's creation of the universe in Book VII: "The Son's echo of God's performative utterance, and the physical actions that issue from the Son's words, appear to be multiple and successive events only because of the causality of human logic and the temporality of human speech" (p. 100). Again, we have to ask ourselves whether such distorting appearances are a by-product of the "causality" and "temporality" inherent in "human logic" and "human speech," or whether they are limitations built into only an analytical syntax. In this light, Esterhammer and Merrill's shared assumptions about a monolithic, uniform, and innately analytical "Language" are products of the same equation between analytical syntax and the "Conceptions of the mind" as James Buchanan and the other eighteenth-century grammarians held, popularized, and enforced.[5] Rather than grammatical structures and theological content always/already being in contention, a theological grammar, such as Silver's, when applied to syntax, allows for one to reinforce the other, as long as we allow for grammatical structures other than the strictly linear, temporal, and analytical SVO.

One of the places where we see these nonlinear, atemporal, and unanalytical syntactical structures at work in *Paradise Lost* is in the passage that caused Ezra Pound so much trouble, God's anointment of the Son. The full passage serves as a perfect example of Esterhammer's "performative utterance."

Just as a priest creates a marriage at the instant he utters the words "I now pronounce you husband and wife," God's declaration instantly enacts the elevation of the Son:

> Hear all ye angels, progeny of Light,
> Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
> Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.
> This day I have begot whom I declare
> My only Son, and on this holy hill
> Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
> At my right hand; your head I him appoint;
> And by myself have sworn, to him shall bow
> All knees in heav'n, and shall confess him Lord:
> Under his great vice-regent reign abide
> United as one individual soul,
> For ever happy: Him who disobeys
> Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
> Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
> Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
> Ordained without redemption, without end.
>
> (5.600–15)

For most of the critics concerned with speech-act theory, such as Esterhammer, the power of the words to bring into being the very thing they are speaking about stems from the situation, what Michael Halliday (1971) calls "the interpersonal

level of language" (p. 333). It matters not so much what is being said, or how it is said. Instead, it is the pre-existing social and power relationships between the speaker and the audience that give the performative utterance its effective power. For example, a spectator at an Olympic Games can say, "Let the games begin!," at any time during the Opening Ceremonies, but it is only when the Master of Ceremonies speaks these same words on the centre stage through a loud speaker that the games actually begin. Within this theoretical framework, it should not matter whether God here speaks using analytical or synthetic syntax. The performative force of his utterance flows from the circumstantial setting "on this holy hill" and the power differential between God and his creations.[6]

Of course, there are some grammatical formulations that can potentially mark a performative act. The imperative mood is the most intuitively apt, but not the most certain to produce the kind of instantaneous result speech-act demands. God, in his anointment, in fact, uses three: "Hear all ye angels…Hear my decree…abide/United," but the fall of Satan and the Rebel angels counters the commands' effectiveness as speech-acts. By contrast, when the Son initiates Creation, he uses three imperatives, the second of which, "peace," counts as one of Davis's anthimeriae (a noun acting as a verb): "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace/…, your discord end." The continued existence of the universe proves that the performative force of these commands still holds, theoretically, to this day. The Olympic Master of Ceremonies, meanwhile, triggers his (or her) performative act with the hortatory subjunctive, "*Let* the games begin!," just as God/the Son does in Book VII with his creative hortatory sequence "Let there be

light" (243), "let there be firmament" (261), "let it divide" (262), "let dry land appear" (284), and so on. However, these grammatical formulae are not essential to performative speech: As we have seen, depending on the power relationship and situation, a command, whether through the imperative or the hortatory, does not guarantee compliance. Also, the performative can operate just as easily through a simple indicative: as the priest does with the statement "I now pronounce you husband and wife" or God does through such simple statements as "This day I have begot…," and "who disobeys…breaks union…and falls…." The instantaneous causal relationship between the speech and the act is not properly the product of any specific grammatical formulation in the speech itself.

So why does Milton include so many inversions in a passage that could have "performed" just as well, if not better, as simple analytical statements? The first, "Him (I) have anointed," involves, in the parlance of Transformational Grammar, the Topicalisation of the object to the "leftmost constituent of S [the sentence]"; in other words, the analytical SVO (Subject, Verb, Object) becomes the synthetic OSV. The second is a little more complex, and threatens to conjure up Pound's image of Milton's "schoolboy translations of Latin": Here, the analytical "I appoint him your head" (subject, verb, direct object, objective complement) becomes the synthetic "your head I him appoint" (objective complement, subject, direct object, verb). The third is what amounts to a double Topicalisation: the prepositional phrase "to him" is Topicalised to the beginning of the clause while the subject "All knees" is Topicalised to the predicate; thus, the analytical "All knees shall bow to him" becomes the synthetic "To him shall

bow/All knees." The last inversion, "him who disobeys/Me disobeys," displaces two objects (*him* and *Me*) to the leftmost constituent of their respective verbs.[7]

By emphasizing God (*Me*) and the Son (*him*), this last inversion, as we have seen in Chapter 2, serves to undercut the agency of those who disobey, an expressive content that its analytical counterpart "who disobeys him, disobeys me" does not produce, so what expressive content do the other four inversions yield? The first three inversions end up grouping together all of the pronouns referring to God and the Son: "Him (I)" (605), "I him" (606), "(*I*) by *myself* have sworn (that) to *him*" (607). This synthetic syntactical patterning reinforces the equation between the Son and God being declared in the anointment itself, a pattern established earlier by the narrator in Book III: "in *him* all *his Father* shone/Substantially expressed" (139–40). Just as the God and Son are joined in their essence, so too are they joined spatially in the sentences' syntax.

This joining of subjects and objects in syntactical space alters our usual expectations of linearity and time. In the analytical versions, the spatial relationships between the words in the sentences create a very specific set of conceptual relationships between the things those words point to. In linear sequence, first the Father as a discrete subject acts, and then the Son as a discrete object receives that action in a linear chain that keeps them apart spatially and temporally. In terms of power relationships, the Father always acts and then the Son receives. In the synthetic versions, however, these relationships become altered. Because subject and object, Father and Son, appear before the verb, there is less of a sense of one imposing an action on another; instead, the synthetic

grouping suggests a more mutual relationship: the Father and Son together, and then the act. The illusion that this grouping creates—Silver's "'new sensation' of another grammar" or Davis's altered neural "pathways"—is one in which the Father and Son are almost joined in the act.

Temporally, this grouping simulates a collapse of the usual sequential SVO into something that approaches simultaneity, a collapse that reaches its apotheosis in "your head I him appoint" where office (objective complement), Father (subject), and Son (object) unite within the action of appointing (the verb). In other words, the analytical version, though straightforward, enacts a linear temporal sequence that splits the subject off spatially from its object and objective complement. The synthetic line unites all three before the verb and collapses the temporal sequence into what effectively simulates the instantaneousness of a divine *fiat*. Although we cannot guarantee that every reader will register these synthetic sequences in the same way, they do invite us to think of the divine in a way that lies outside the strictly linear, temporal, and logical box of an analytical syntax. That these four inversions cluster in a passage describing a performative, declarative act argues for their inclusion within the set of potential grammatical markers for a speech-act, but as we have seen, they operate in a way that makes them radically different from their more conventional imperative, hortatory, and indicative cousins.

One curious feature of God's anointing of the Son in Book V is that his key declarations echo backwards to Book III and forwards to Abdiel's admonition of the Rebel angels later in Book V. "Your head I him appoint" becomes "under

thee as Head Supreme/Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions I reduce" (319–20), as God re-enacts the Son's anointment after he has offered himself as the Redeemer for Man's sin. Here, the analytical version would read "I reduce Thrones, Princedoms, Dominions under thee as Supreme Head," and this is, in fact, what Buchanan (1773) does with the line (p. 198). The analytical sequence brings out the sense of God imposing the action upon the angels, with the Son and the office (Head) displaced to the end. The synthetic version, like its Book V counterpart, unites subject and object before the verb, but by placing the Son and his office, in their prepositional (*under*) and relative adverbial phrases (*as*), at the beginning, still emphasizes the Son more than the analytical sequence does.

This sequence may partially account for Abdiel's strange counterargument to Satan's complaint that in the Son's ascension they have been reduced, later in Book V:

> Thyself though great and glorious dost thou count,
> Of all angelic nature joined in one,
> Equal to him begotten Son, by whom
> As by his Word the mighty Father made
> All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n
> By him created in their bright degrees,
> Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
> Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
> Essential Powers, nor by his reign obscured,
> But more illustrious made, since he the head

> One of our number thus reduced becomes,
> His laws our laws, all honour to him done
> Returns our own. (833–45)

In Abdiel's argument, we have all the elements of God's anointing decree, but they are shifted around into other syntactical configurations. "Your head I him appoint" is reconfigured as "he the head/One of our number thus reduced becomes."[8] Suddenly, it is not the "Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers" that are reduced in the Son's anointment, but the Son himself. As the Word, the Son is inextricably tied to the Father, and so the Son, in becoming the Head of the angelic orders, is actually condescending in a way similar to his impending incarnation: He becomes "one of [the angelic] orders" in the same way that he will become one with humanity. Thus, the Son becomes a meeting point, an intersection between angel and God, and later between human beings and God. It is through that intersection that Abdiel can claim "all honour to him done/Returns our own," in a reciprocal relationship reminiscent of Luther's interpretation of "the righteousness of God" through the Hebrew genitive.

That these complex slippages between subjects and objects are easier to make through a synthetic syntax is evidenced by Satan's insistence upon God as a grammatical subject imposing actions upon the angels as receiving objects. In his opening speech to the assembled angels in Book V, Satan's version of the anointment is primarily analytical: "Another now hath to himself engrossed/All power, and us eclipsed under the name/Of King anointed" (775–77). From Satan's perspective, the angels are missing altogether from the first action: There

is only "Another," "himself," and "power." In the second, the angels (*us*) are Topicalised to before the verb, but they are "eclipsed under the name." The inversion places all the emphasis on *us*, while making it clear that the action of anointing the Son as King is as far removed from them as possible. Similarly, any other action will be an imposition of a distant subject upon a separate object: "Who can…assume/Monarchy over such as live by right/His equals?" (794– 96) and "(Who) can introduce/Law and edict on us?" (797–98). Abdiel interprets God's original synthetic declaration into a similarly synthetic version that harmonises subjects and objects, whereas Satan, for the most part, reinterprets it into an analytical relationship that distances the angels from the divine subject. For Satan, God's actions separate him from the angels; for Abdiel, both God and the angels are part of the action.

The contrast is even more apparent when we compare the manner in which Abdiel and Satan respond to a second component of God's anointing declaration: "to him shall bow/All knees." For Abdiel, the synthetic becomes analytical through the insertion into the action of each angel as a *soul*: "every soul in Heav'n/Shall bend the knee" (816–17). For Satan, such an act becomes "Knee-tribute" (782)—a portmanteau compound completely devoid of the sublime sense of Luther's Hebrew genitive—that the Son "receive[s] from us" (781); Satan, in a grammatical sense, objectifies it. For God, the newly anointed Son still comes first (*to him*) and the act of kneeling becomes a synecdoche for the angels themselves. In Book III, God uses the same rhetorical trope and synthetic syntax, with the angels (*knees*) in the primary position now, but still allied with the Son

(*thee*): "All knees to thee shall bow" (321). Abdiel, by transforming the synecdoche into a full subject, verb, and object, takes these synthetic declarations and integrates himself and his fellow angels into the action; Satan, meanwhile, transforms them into inflammatory questions: "Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend/The supple knee?" (787–88). Again, Satan objectifies the "knee" (and the neck) in an analytical sequence that distances both from the subject and the soul, in marked contrast to Abdiel.

It would be far too simplistic to say from this that synthetic syntax is always divine and that analytical syntax is, therefore, always correspondingly satanic. As we have seen, both fallen and unfallen speakers use both. What is important is that if we "resolve" all of the synthetic syntactical structures uniformly into their analytical equivalents, then we are seeing only one half of the picture Milton is presenting in the divine books of *Paradise Lost*. What Satan and Abdiel illustrate, here, are the myriad and complex ways in which we can respond to synthetic syntax. If we remove these inversions, then we remove the stimulus, and suddenly Abdiel's zealous obedience *and* Satan's equally passionate treachery become matters solely of their disparate natures, rather than their active interpretation or misinterpretation. Without interpretation, even Abdiel's zeal would be an artificial zeal, such as it is only in the motions.

Of course, such levels of interpretation would be entirely unnecessary if God spoke and the universe operated strictly according to James Buchanan's analytical grammar and the "Conceptions of the mind." However, that uniformly analytical world would be free from the kinds of "syntactical speculations" Beer

ascribes to John Tyndall, or the "'new sensation[s]' of another grammar" Silver sees in Luther's resolution to his spiritual crisis, or even the "new" neural pathways Davis speculates are opened up by Shakespeare's anthimerae. Where these speculations, sensations, and pathways lead to is a world outside Buchanan's analytical box, a place where actions can occur outside of time; where subjects and objects can participate simultaneously in an action, rather than in a linear sequence; where two entities can be distinct one moment, indistinguishable the next, and then distinct once again.

It is to just such a world that Raphael introduces us in his caveat to what will be his account of the divine Creation of the Universe in Book VII of *Paradise Lost*:

> Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
> Than time or motion, but to human ears
> Cannot without process of speech be told,
> So told as earthly notion can receive.
>
> (7.176–79)[9]

It is in this world before there was a world that our usual temporal, linear, and logical distinctions break down. In one scene from the Creation, we can see these collapsing categories at work:

> on the wat'ry calm
> His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
> And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth

Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
The black tartareous cold infernal dregs
Adverse to life: then founded, then conglobed
Like things to like, the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the air,
And earth self-balanced on her centre hung.

(234–42)

One way to read the passage is to view it as a sequence of discrete actions by the subject: Thus, the Spirit of God outspreads "His brooding wings," he infuses "vital virtue" and "vital warmth/Throughout the fluid mass," he purges downward "The black tartareous cold infernal dregs," he founds and conglobes "Like things to like," disparts "the rest to several place," spins "out the air" between, and hangs the "earth self-balanced on her centre." Viewed from this perspective, creation is a series of analytical events where the Spirit of God as subject imposes the various forms onto matter as the object.[10] If this were the only way the passage could be interpreted, then creation itself would take on the character of Satan's view of the Son's anointment as an imposition of God's action upon the angels.

However, that last act raises the question of whether creation is only a one-way linear operation: Does the earth really balance itself or is it balanced by the Spirit of God? The answer is both: If the earth is "self-balanced" and the Spirit of God created it that way, then the Spirit of God is also through creation balancing it. Grammatically, this reciprocity comes to the fore through another layer of interpretation working backwards through the passage. From the

perspective of a "self-balanced" earth, the verb *hung* can shift to a past participle modifying *earth*, "earth self-balanced on her centre hung." From there, the other verbs also have this potentially double grammatical sense: the air "spun out" between, the rest "disparted," like things "folded, then conglobed," dregs "downward purged,"[11] and "vital virtue infused." This shift from the verb to a past participle would not be as possible if all the verbs came uniformly in a position before their respective objects. The inversions, then, allow us to read the passage in two ways simultaneously, in the same way the Hebrew genitive allowed Luther to read "the righteousness of God": The divine acts upon matter, but matter does not merely receive that action; it also responds. Through the slippage of verbs to past participles, the actions of creation are simultaneously qualities.

Who is actually performing these actions is also a matter of immense complexity. At the initiation of creation, we hear the Son's performative imperatives: "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace/Said then th'Omnific Word, your discord end" (7.216–17). As Angela Esterhammer (1994) suggests, the Father speaks the Word, and the Son is the Word, and so, here, although the Word is speaking, the Father is also speaking through the Word: Though God "uncircumscribed" himself retires (7.170) from Creation, he is also there because he sends his "overpowering Spirit and might" along with the Son, and to what God speaks "His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect" (7.175). Although actions are ascribed to various subjects throughout creation, they are all linked through this omnipresent Godhood: The Father is the Son is the Spirit, and

so when the text says the Son is speaking or the Spirit is acting, all three are all doing so simultaneously. Even the angels, to a more limited extent, "Easier then Air with Air, if Spirits embrace/Total they mix" (8.626–27), as Raphael blushingly tells Adam. This same slippage of persons in the divine occurs at the narrative level, when in Book X, the Son descends to pass judgement on humanity, but it is God to whom Adam and Eve end up speaking.

For Esterhammer, this collapse of entities is limited by language: The "multiple and successive events" of Creation only appear as such "because of the causality of human logic and the temporality of human speech" (p. 100). However, causality and temporality in human speech are more complex than Esterhammer gives credit. The simple attributive tag "Said then th'Omnific Word" contains a conventional inversion of the subject and object, but the "Word" in that Topicalised position could also invite its function as an object. In this way, the Omnific Word says the words of the creative imperatives, and the Son as the Word also says those words, but the Father as an implied subject is also speaking the Son/Word as an object who speaks the words of creation. Thus, the passage holds *in potentia* an added layer where the Father (He) is also the subject: "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou, deep, peace/(He) said then th'Omnific Word, your discord end." Rather than the events of Creation circumventing the inherent causal and temporal limitations of "human speech," a more inclusive view of those causal and temporal relationships—one that includes the possibilities opened up by a synthetic, rather than a strictly analytical syntax—

allows for human speech to suggest nonlinear, atemporal, alogical concepts even if it cannot capture those events entirely.

All this would be irrelevant if there was any other word in the subject position of the attributive tag, but here, *Word*, which we usually take as an object, is inserted paradigmatically into a subject slot in the syntagmatic axis. Because the syntagmatic axis is flexible enough to accommodate both functions, as long as we allow for a synthetic as well as an analytical sequence, then these multiple layers of meaning are possible. In this way, the vertical insertion of the "God-Word" into the tag's horizontal syntax would thus reinforce, rather than "destabilize" or "disrupt" the meaning, as Merrill (1986, p. 13) would have it. If Stanley Fish ("Literature," 1980) is right, and "the execution [of textual interpretation] involves an analysis of the developing responses of the reader to the words as they succeed one another in time" (p. 27), then we would read the sequence "I appoint him your head" differently from "your head I him appoint." Synthetic time and causality is not the same as analytical time and causality. It is in this overlapping zone between language and the nonlinear, atemporal, and alogical that Milton founds his Creation in *Paradise Lost*. Although Buchanan's strictly analytical syntactical "Conceptions of the mind" cannot approach it, Milton's more fluid synthetic syntax can at least point to it.

This pointing of language towards the divine qualifies synthetic syntax for inclusion within the myriad techniques of accommodation. As Neil D. Graves (2001) defines it, accommodation:

> functions by expressing the incomprehensibility of God in terms which "accommodate" God to human understanding. Accordingly, it presupposes that language cannot adequately describe God, while yet authorizing the attempt to depict him, conscious that the resulting image is not a true representation of the deity. (p. 251)

It is important here to note that Graves does not say that language *cannot* describe God; the modifier "adequately" suggests, instead, only that language cannot describe God *completely*. The categories of language and God are not mutually exclusive, but neither are they identical. This linked, but not interchangeable relationship is in keeping with Raphael's cautionary caveat: divine acts "Cannot without process of speech be told." The Archangel does not say that these divine acts cannot be told *at all* through language, but neither does he say that they will *always* be told through it. Just as a "not unred cat" is not necessarily red, the litotic formulation "cannot without," as a double negative, suggests, but does not state, that such acts *can* be told *with* the process of speech. The rhetorical reticence inherent in Raphael's litotes, thus, keeps the intersection between the divine and language at the level of a possibility that never quite collapses into a certainty.

For most critics of *Paradise Lost*, accommodation has centred on issues of figural tropes, images, and narrative elements. Graves (2001), for example, argues that, through *De doctrina christiana* and *Paradise Lost*, "Milton envisages a synecdochic theory of scriptural accommodation which diverges from the traditional theory" (p. 252), exemplified by St. Augustine's view in *De genesi* that

references to God's arm, hands, and body are "accommodated in the language through metaphor" (p. 253). Whether metaphorical or synedochal, these "Biblical images are, for Milton, right, though not complete. They are consummately devised to convey as full a notion of God as humans are able to understand and, moreover, the images contain a kind of epistemological elasticity, adjusted to the intellect of the reader" (Killeen, 2007, p. 110).

For some, these images cross over into the very narrative structure of both the biblical account and Milton's re-imagining of it. Sarah R. Morrison (2009), for example, sees the serpent itself—cursed, seemingly unjustly, to crawl along on its belly—as acting as a kind of physical educational accommodating tool for Adam and Eve, and all of humanity, to understand better the Fall and their possible redemption: "*Paradise Lost* reveals that the facets of fallen existence that seem most to divide man from God are not merely inescapable consequences of the Fall or mysteries not to be inquired into too closely, but also are, however lamentable, the conditions to man's regeneration" (p. 185). Kathleen M. Swaim (1984) sees the Son, himself, through his attendant light imagery, as an accommodation: "the accessible Son gives form to the inaccessible Father; Christ makes the invisible visible; the Word makes the inexpressible articulate" (p. 466).[12] Finally, Charles G. Shirley, Jr. (1980) finds that Raphael's entire account is an accommodation: "Accommodation may appear in the way a part of the narrative is related, as when the reader overhears Raphael recounting divine history for Adam, as well as in the choice of furnishings for heavenly scenes and

shapes for heavenly actors" (p. 52). As with tropes, images, and narrative techniques, so too with synthetic syntax.

But for a glimpse of how language structures themselves can function as a form of accommodation, we must turn to Valerie Carnes' (1970) article "Time and Language in Milton's *Paradise Lost*":

> If we take time to be one aspect of the human condition, it follows that time is that aspect of existence which is implicit both in the content and the structure of any language system. Thus whereas the Hopi Indian must frame his thoughts within the structure of a process language which can tell us that "It is summering," but not that "it is summer," the English language has provided us with verb changes called tenses which express the ideas of an event's having occurred in the past, occurring at the time of speaking or writing, or being about to occur at some point in future time. It is no surprise, then, to find Milton, writing within a language system so temporally constructed as English, manipulating that language to suggest certain concepts of time in his poem. (pp. 520–21)

Although Carnes focuses on "verb tenses," an inflectional insertion along the paradigmatic axis, the principles of accommodation she outlines here can just as easily apply to inversions of word order along the syntagmatic axis. Just as the Hopi "It is summering" evokes a different sense of time from "It is summer," the synthetic "your head I him appoint" entails a different temporal and relational

matrix from the strictly analytical "I appoint him your head." In light of this correlation between language structures and our concepts of time, we can see that Milton's inverted synthetic syntax, with its attendant ability to open up "syntactical speculations," "'new sensation[s]' of another grammar," "new" neural pathways, is a species of what Swaim (1984) sees as accommodation's "stretching exercises of the mind and imagination…at once a closing and an opening, a builder of reader confidence and a provocation of inquiry" (p. 463).

All this is not to suggest that an inverted synthetic syntax is always functioning as a form of accommodation, or that a linear analytical syntax is incapable ever of functioning as such. After all, Books III, V, VI, and VII contain a vast mixture of synthetic and analytical sentences. What it does suggest is that some of Milton's inverted synthetic constructions in these books that describe divine events can serve an expressive function by suggesting to us a nonlinear, atemporal, and alogical state of being outside our own. This divine world within the context of *Paradise Lost* is not entirely separated from us by our language, but neither does our language give us unmediated and unrestricted access to it: In these instances, as a form of accommodation, synthetic syntax is always "at once a closing and an opening." However, if we were to remove these synthetic syntactical features from the poem altogether, as Pound and Buchanan do by rewriting it into a uniformly analytical sequence, then these potentially accommodating syntactical openings and closings would remain closed forever. In short, Milton's inverted synthetic syntax is not "Omnific," but its scope and

powers are broader and more varied than a poem—or a world—reduced to Buchanan's strictly analytical "Conceptions of the mind" would allow.

Notes

[1] Although Davis (2008) is studying the trope of anthimeria in Shakespeare, a product of paradigmatic word insertion, rather than the scheme of anastrophe, a product of inversion along the syntagmatic axis, both deviate by their shared nature as rhetorical "colours" from grammatical "old and aging mental habits and easy long-established sequences" (p. 4), and so his potential "syntactic re-evaluation" would apply to both.

[2] When Silver (2001) talks of the "semantic equation of words to things" (p. 22), she is presumably referring to Cave Beck and the other seventeenth-century grammarians. The fact that she attributes the monolithic, traditional interpretation of Paul's phrase at the root of Luther's crisis to their correlation between a word and its objective referent rests on the assumption that that system allowed for only one "true" referent per word and vice versa, and thus could produce only one meaning for a phrase.

However, there is nothing in the word-thing system that would preclude Paul's phrase from having both the possessive and objective layers that Silver sees Luther ascribing to it through the Hebrew genitive. The word-thing correspondence may posit a one-to-one relationship at the level of the word, but it does not necessarily posit only one meaning at the level of the phrase. Even Cave Beck's system added "lexical markers" as accessories to words to show their "grammatical functions" (Cohen, 1977, p. 5), and so Beck's system would undoubtedly have a marker for the genitive.

[3] The genitive creating a compound word in Hebrew yields such portmanteau words as "book-house" (house of books) for "school," and is analogous to such Old English portmanteaus as "wave-rider" (rider of waves) for "ship."

[4] Although Silver (2001) does not use the example "the love of God," she does list Luther's use of other biblical genitives as substantiation for his reading: "I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God" (p. 22). In all cases, because of the genitive's double sense, our strength, wisdom, salvation, glory, love, and righteousness is also God's flowing through us and back to him.

[5] Essentially, all of Merrill and Esterhammer's limitations apply to Buchanan's "resolution," or reordering, of every line in the first six books of *Paradise Lost* into their analytical SVO equivalent, but they do not necessarily apply to Milton's actual inverted, involved, and synthetic sentences. A far greater assumption lurking behind Merrill and Esterhammer's "Language" is that whenever we read any poem's actual synthetic word order, we are "resolving" it in our heads into its "true" analytical equivalent, in line with Buchanan's natural "Conceptions of our minds." However, our minds do not necessarily have to work that way, and neither do our sentences.

[6] In this emphasis on the contingent and circumstantial, the performative reading of the passage reiterates at a theoretical level many of the arguments Satan makes against the elevation of the Son. Theologically speaking, however, God's

performative powers are a part of his omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient essence; they cannot be contingent or circumstantial, because God cannot ever be other than he is.

[7] As we have seen in the previous chapter, James Buchanan (1773) "resolves" all of these synthetic lines into the same analytical sequences I have provided here, what he would call their "natural" grammatical constructions.

[8] Buchanan (1773) resolves the line into "he who is the head one of our number becomes thus reduced" (p. 373), but the analytical syntax could just as easily read "he, as the head, thus reduced, becomes one of our number." As a linking verb, *to become* can take either a noun (*one*) or an adjective (the past participle *reduced*) as its predicate. Depending on which one we choose, the other becomes an appositive phrase modifying *he*. No matter which path one takes, however, Abdiel's argument remains the same. What is at issue here, instead, is the radically different ways that Abdiel and Satan read God's original synthetic syntax in his anointment speech.

[9] James Buchanan (1773) chose to "resolve" only the first six books of *Paradise Lost* because youth "by the time they have read all six" would "be able to read not only the whole poem, but every English classic, whether in prose or verse, with taste and judgement" (p. 15). Since his *First Six Books* was published posthumously, we will never know whether he would have eventually changed his mind.

However, it would be safe to say that these lines of Raphael's would not have afforded him as much of a challenge as other more "violently" inverted passages in the poem do. The first inversion involves the topicalisation (or transposition) of the predicate adjective and subject, "Immediate are the acts"; the second involves the insertion of the propositional phrase "without process of speech" into the verb phrase "Cannot…be told." The rest of the passage would be subject to Buchanan's second component of his "grammatical" rendering, "properly" supplying the ellipses. From these principles, we can assume Buchanan's passage would run as follows:

> The acts of God are immediate, (and they are)
> More swift than time or motion (are), but to human ears
> (They) cannot be told without process of speech,
> So told (in such a way) as earthly notion can receive (them).

As Miltonic passages go, Raphael's proviso is fairly straightforward grammatically, even by Buchanan's eighteenth-century standards.

[10] It is just such an imposition of creation on an inherently hostile chaos that Regina Schwartz (1988) advocates in her book *Remembering and Repeating*: *Biblical Creation in* Paradise Lost.

[11] In the passage, the dregs and the air are the only created objects in which the verb and the direct object are not inverted. However, even in these positions before the object, the verbs *purged* and *spun* can still also hold the grammatical function as past participial modifiers. Since even in an analytical syntax,

modifiers can shift position in a sentence, *purged* can still act as an adjectival modifier whether it comes before or after the noun: "purged dregs" or "dregs purged." So too with *spun*. The fact that four out of six of the actions invert the verb and the object, however, opens up a doubling of grammatical functions, an opening reinforced by the earth's status as "self-balanced."

[12] The embodiment of the Son as an accommodation in and of itself is the same argument Abdiel makes to Satan in Book V. By interpreting "your head" in the performative utterance, "your head I him appoint," as the Son being made "one of our number," Abdiel interprets the Son as an accommodation God makes to the angels, in the same way Swain sees the Son as an accommodation to Man.

Chapter Five

A Catalogue of Inversions: Synthetic Pictures, Pronouns, and False Persuasion in a Worldly Language

In a mundane universe, we would expect to see an end to the kind of synthetic syntactical effects that we see in the divine books of *Paradise Lost*, whether it be God's heavenly dialogue with the Son in Book III or Raphael's account of the War in Heaven in Books V and VI and the Creation in Book VII. And we do, but this does not mean an end to Milton's synthetic syntactical inversions. Instead, without the contextual supports of both theological accommodation and the ontological peculiarities of nonlinear, atemporal, and alogical events and entities, the function of these inversions shifts. Instead of a collapsing of space and time, we get inverted synthetic syntax creating pictures of objects and entities in space and time. Rather than the slippage of one entity into another, we get inversions of pronouns that enact changing social, psychological, and physical relationships between entities. Finally, and more importantly, the mundane world can do something that the divine world cannot: It can produce syntactical inversions designed specifically to create no meaning, or the wrong meaning altogether; in short, it can deceive.

Thus, synthetic syntactical inversions are never one-dimensional. As we have seen, their uses and effects are myriad and highly context dependant. Therefore, we would expect them to function differently within the context of a world differentiated by linear sequence, finite time, and logical distinctions. What

is important is that, although we may have returned to this realm of the linear, temporal, and logical, that does not necessarily entail a return to a uniformly analytical syntax. Even in this mundane world, synthetic inverted syntax can still perform expressive functions that its strictly analytical counterpart cannot.

One of the simplest places to start in this tour of worldly synthetic syntax is the so-called "catalogue of the devils" in Book I. As the narrator tells us, he is recounting what the Muse is telling him: "Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last" (376). What follows is nearly four pages of text and 146 lines in which each devil is introduced, elaborated upon through epic similes, and then passed by to the next devil in the sequence. Thus, the sequence begins with "First Moloch" (392), "Next Chemos" (406), and then a series of sentences that act as transitions from one demonic description to the next: "With these came they, who…had general names/Of Baälim and Ashtaroth" (419–22), "With these in troop/Came Astoreth" (436–37), "Thammuz came next behind" (446), "Next came one/Who mourned in earnest…/Dagon his name" (457–62), "Him followed Rimmon" (467), "After these appeared/A crew, who under names of old renown,/Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train…abused/Fanatic Egypt" (476–80); until finally, "Belial came last" (490) as one of "the prime in order and in might" (506). "The rest were long to tell" (507), but they are still included in the signal for the end of the catalogue "All these and more came flocking" (522).

Within this catalogue of the prime orders, Moloch and Chemos are introduced through ellipses ("First Moloch [came]"; "Next Chemos [came]"),[1] five sets are revealed to us through inverted syntax, and two (Thammuz and

Belial) are presented analytically. In keeping with his goal of rendering *Paradise Lost* into "Grammatical Construction" according to the "Conceptions of the mind," Buchanan (1773) rewrites two of the inversions into standard analytical order: "Astoreth came with these in troop" (p. 57) and "Rimmon followed him" (pp. 60–61). The rest he leaves as Milton wrote them: Osiris and his crew (p. 62), Dagon (p. 60), and Baälim and Ashtaroth (p. 56). Of these three, a strict analytical rewrite of two would result in the circular nonsense of Moloch and Chemos taking on the names of Baälim and Ashtaroth—"They [Baälim and Ashtaroth] came with these [Moloch and Chemos] who…had general names of Baälim and Ashtaroth"—and the factual error of Dagon and Rimmon abusing Egypt, not Osiris and the other Egyptian "deities"—"A crew [Osiris et al.] appeared after these [Dagon and Rimmon] who under old renowned names…abused Egypt." Dagon's relative clause, "Who mourned in earnest," is safe from such grammatical chaos whether the line reads "Next came one" or "One came next," so Buchanan's failure to resolve the subject into its "rightful" analytical position is, by his own grammatical principles, inexcusable. However, Buchanan's spotty record here attests to the grammatical complexity of the catalogue—and Buchanan's sensitivity to it—and so, represents a textual limit where his strict analytical syntactical principles break down. Too close an adherence to an analytical syntax would derail the grammar of the catalogue, resulting in a comprehensive collision of vague pronouns and misplaced modifiers.

Keeping all of the inversions intact, on the other hand, reassembles the catalogue into an orderly sequence: "With these [Moloch and Chemos] came they

[Baälim and Ashtaroth]," "With these [Baälim and Ashtaroth] in troop came Astoreth," "Thammuz came next behind," "Next came [Dagon]," "Him [Dagon] followed Rimmon," "After these [Dagon and Rimmon] appeared a crew [Osiris and others]," "Belial came last" as one of the prime orders, and finally, "All these and more [the entire catalogue, plus 'the rest'] came flocking." Here, all the pronouns line up with their proper antecedents; all relative clauses ally with their logical referents. The overall effect is of a structural, incremental chain of transitions that pull the passage together grammatically across the (relatively) immense textual space of 146 lines and multiple pages.

That these synthetic syntactical inversions in the passage function as more than just grammatical transitions can be illustrated by our contrasting them to similar constructions that function purely as transitions. One such transitional tag occurs throughout the poem as a signal for the movement from one speech to another.[2] For example, Beëlzebub speaks after Satan: "And him thus answered soon his bold compeer" (1.127). An analytical reader, expecting the Deep Structure sequence of SVO, finds in this doubly Topicalised Surface the same sort of confusions Pound decries in "Him who disobeys." *Him*, despite its inflectional form as an object, could be mistaken for a subject, and Satan, not Beëlzebub becomes the "bold compeer" because of the phrase's displacement into the object position. Buchanan (1773), as Pound undoubtedly would, resolves the line into its easier analytical equivalent, "And his bold compeer soon answered him thus" (p. 31), but here the pronoun *him* loses that more direct spatial connection with the speech that comes before it.

As transitions, then, these synthetic inversions operate in much the same way as *whom* in the more conventionally acceptable inversion "to whom the winged Warriour thus return'd" (4.576). It is in these "extremely Latin connexions between the sentences" that C. S. Lewis (1942) sees "one way" Milton's Latinate tags "tighten up our language" (pp. 46–47). Inverted synthetic syntactical tags, such as we see here, do provide a "tighter" transition spatially, than their analytical equivalents do. However, since the analytical tag can still make the transitional referential connection—perhaps not as directly as the synthetic, but without the synthetic's potential for miscomprehension—then the tag's synthetic inversion becomes an accident to the line's transitional function, not a necessity. Thus, even Lewis can concede, "These expressions do not represent real connexions of thought, any more than the prolonged syllables in Handel represent real pronunciation" (p. 47). The synthetic inverted tag, acting purely as a transition, produces little more than a difference in sound over its analytical counterpart.

However, the expressive stakes are raised when the inverted syntactical tags involve verbs of motion, as they do in the catalogue of the devils. Before the catalogue, the narrator establishes the pattern when Satan is released from the Stygian flood. Beëlzebub follows him, but the syntax of the line is inverted synthetically to "Him followed his next mate" (1.238). Unlike the purely transitional inversions between speeches (and the narrator provides one only 33 lines down: "So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub/Thus answered" [271–72]), the transitional inversion here includes a spatial dimension. Like Rhoetus hiding

himself (**se**) within the surrounding large (*magnum*) bowl (*cratera*), the *Him* comes before the subject *his next mate*. In other words, just as Satan comes first, followed by Beëlzebub, physically in the scene, *Him* (Satan) comes first in the sentence, followed by *his next mate* (Beëlzebub) in the textual space of the sentence's inverted synthetic syntax. This added expressive dimension goes beyond the merely grammatical: It enacts a graphic syntactical representation of the scene *and* acts as a transition from one passage to another.

When we apply this mapping of the physical sequences of objects in space onto the syntactical sequences of the catalogue of devils, we see that the passage is not so much a list, as a procession or pageant through space. Since they are moving "in order and in might" (506), their physical sequence in the procession is in keeping with their place within the hierarchy: who is "prime" and who is not. Physical space represents spiritual states, status, and power differentials. Thus, when Buchanan reorders the transitions according to analytical expectations, he is upsetting more than just the grammatical machinery of pronoun and antecedent, modifier and referent. We see the upset most clearly in the two transitional tags Buchanan rewrites the most in keeping with his analytical principles. In Milton's synthetic version, Baälim and Ashtaroth (*these*) precede Astoreth both physically and syntactically, "With these in troop/Came Astoreth" (436–37); Dagon (*Him*) precedes Rimmon, "Him followed Rimmon" (467). Buchanan (1773) puts Astoreth and Rimmon, first, analytically, as the syntactical subjects of their respective tags: "Astoreth came with these in troop" (p. 57) and "Rimmon followed him" (pp. 60–61). The semantic sense may be the same, but

syntactically, Astoreth and Rimmon are now leading, rather than following, within the textual space of their respective sentences.[3]

With Milton's synthetic inversions intact, however, the catalogue of the devils is a syntactic procession, as well as a physical, spiritual, and status-laden one. It is just this type of delicate syntactical organization that Beer (1984) sees in Tyndall's reading of *Paradise Lost* as "the writer's spatial organization of sense," but here, at the service of expression, rather than solely as a form of mental exercise. Stripping the passage of its syntactical inversions, then, would strip it of this added dimension of syntactical expression, and so, despite the supposed increase in the ease of reading for the analytically minded, such an alteration to the text would still leave the passage—and the poem as a whole—consequently diminished.

That this synthetic syntactical picturing Milton transferred from the Latin Classics into English, I have argued elsewhere (Chapter 3), but that connection is reinforced when we examine an example of such a process on a scale larger than a simple sentence, with an important proviso. Among his examples of "Metaphor from Word Order" in his book *Golden Latin Artistry*, L. P. Wilkinson (1963) includes the following passage describing Mulciber's expulsion from Olympus in Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

> from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve
> A summer's day; and with the setting sun
> Dropt…. (1.742–45)

Although he concedes his example is "not perhaps strictly metaphorical" (p. 66), Wilkinson parallels this strategic delay of the verb until the next line with Vergil's placement of *incidit* to describe graphically a flame swooping down on a crop of corn (in segetem veluti cum flamma furentibus austris/*incidit*) and "Homer's Cyclops dashing Odysseus' companions to the ground" (p. 66). Archie Burnett (2003) in his study of the epic's lineation, "'Sense Variously Drawn Out': The Line in *Paradise Lost*," sees the same principle at work in the lines, although he extends his analysis beyond Wilkinson's ellipses: "Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star/On *Lemnos* th'*Aégean* Isle: thus they relate/Erring" (1.745–47). In Burnett's analysis, "'Erring' also comes with such a jolt because of the preceding illusion of falling through vast space created by the sustained syntax crossing all boundaries at 'fell/From heaven,' 'from morn/to noon' and 'setting sun/Dropped'" (p. 90). Wilkinson writes, "Among the devices by which the immense height is here indicated in terms of time is the repetition of `from…to' and `noon'" (p. 66). Separated by 40 years, and coming at the passage from two entirely different disciplines, both critics arrive at a very similar destination in the same passage.

Although Burnett makes no specific mention of Greek or Latin passages, the parallel is even more striking between his work and Donald Lateiner's (1990). Burnett juxtaposes a series of passages where "line division coincides with other divisions and partings" (p. 81) in the War in Heaven ("angelic choirs/On each hand parting" [5.251–52], "the front/Divided" [6.566–67], and "the impure/Far separate" [6.742–43]), the Creation ("the hemisphere/Divided" [7.250–51], and

"The waters underneath from those above/Dividing" [7.268–69]), Chaos bridged by Sin and Death ("on either side/Disparted chaos over built exclaimed" [10.415–16]), and Moses parting the Red Sea ("Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand/Divided" [12.196–99]). All of these examples would find an appropriate home in the latter half of Lateiner's second category of mimetic syntax, "Juxtaposing and Separating," although Ovid, working in Latin, is also able to make "Words for 'divide' appear at verse divisions or caesura *and* separate a noun from its adjective" (p. 216, emphasis mine) across a line, as in Vergil's "sed *magnum* [large] metuens se post *cratera* [bowl] tegebat." Burnett's example where "the reader 'looks down' with Satan" (p. 85):

> Satan from hence now on the lower stair
> That scaled by steps of gold to heaven gate
> Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
> Of all this world at once. (3.540–43)

has its correlative in the *Amores* where "when Corinna's pet parrot's death is mentioned, his 'fall' (*occidit*) occurs twice as the eye falls one line" (p. 231). In fact, all of Burnett's examples would find a place somewhere within Lateiner's Category One: Verse-Position of Ordering Words (especially Initial and Final), Category Two: Juxtaposing and Separating, and not surprisingly, Category Five: Enjambment as Fall, Eminence, or Return.

Such resemblances, however, do require caution. On the surface, the argument seems to have validity: Milton was influenced by Vergil and Ovid;

Vergil and Ovid used these syntactical effects; therefore, Milton used these syntactical effects. As Burnett notes (p. 77), Milton cites Vergil as one of his "classical precedents" in his prefatory note ("The Verse") to the 1668 issue of the poem's first edition: "The measure is *English* Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of *Homer* in *Greek*, and of *Virgil* in *Latin*," and in his book *Milton and Ovid*, Richard J. DuRocher (1985), and in her thesis, Judith May Radner (1991), among others, have documented Ovid's influence on Milton, so the first premise does have some support in its truth value. Meanwhile, A. M. Young's (1933), Wilkinson's (1963), and Lateiner's (1990) studies attest to the truth-value of the second premise, and so the argument stands as a whole on a general level.

When we apply the argument to something as widespread as enjambment though, the syllogism degenerates due to its reversal of the first premise and conclusion: Milton uses enjambment for syntactical expressive effects; Vergil and Ovid use the same technique for the same reason; therefore, Milton is following Vergil and Ovid. The undistributed middle term inevitably leads to invalidity because there are far more poets and far more poems that utilize enjambment beyond Vergil, Ovid, and indeed, Milton. At most, an argument based on enjambment can prove only that Milton, Vergil, and Ovid all wrote poetry, because all poetry (at least within these time periods) included enjambment. This is not to say that enjambment does not have the pictorial expressiveness Burnett, Lateiner, and Wilkinson claim for it; only that enjambment alone is insufficient proof for Milton's use of syntactic representation in *Paradise Lost*. For that, we

would have to look for an occurrence of syntax following sense distinct from enjambment.

Returning to Wilkinson's example, then, but excluding enjambment, we begin to see what he and Burnett miss, and why:

> from Morn
> To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,
> A Summer's day; and with the setting Sun,
> Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star,
> On Lemnos th'Aégean Isle. (1.742–46)

Wilkinson inserts ellipses after "Dropt" because what follows is irrelevant to his argument about the word's placement after the line break. Burnett extends the passage down to "Erring" (747), because the word's "jolt" after "the preceding illusion of falling" (created by the enjambment) is his final destination. Neither argument depends upon the passage's syntax for the effect to work: Both "thus, they relate/Erring" and "with the setting Sun/(he) Dropt" are unassumingly analytical (conjunctive adverb, subject, verb, modifying participle; and prepositional phrase, elliptical subject, verb). Thus, what Wilkinson and Burnett are actually illustrating here is pictorial lineation, not pictorial synthetic syntax.

Looking solely at the syntax, on the other hand, we see an entirely different picture emerging. The first main clause contains a prepositional phrase, subject, verb, prepositional phrase, and appositive phrase. The two prepositional phrases, "from Morn/To Noon" and "from Noon to dewy Eve," trace out in time

the course of the appositive "A Summer's day," but what creates the syntactical picture in the passage is the insertion of the subject and verb ("he fell") between the two prepositional halves of the day's course. The passage could just as easily have read analytically "he fell/From Morn to Noon, from Noon to dewy Eve"; in fact, the enjambment, by creating a sense of tumbling from the precipice of the line's end, would have provided Wilkinson and Burnett with yet another example of the pictorial lineation they describe. However, that is not what is occurring here: It is the "fabled" Mulciber who is falling, not the actual Architect of Pandaemonium.[4] Thrown as he is "by angry Jove/Sheer o'er the crystal battlements" (1.741–42), Mulciber's fall traces out a parabola,[5] not a linear headlong descent from Heaven to Hell, like that of his daemonic source material. In effect, the lines replicate this arc by placing the fabled Mulciber at its height: From the perspective of the humans below, Mulciber falls in space "from the Zenith" graphically located between the two prepositional phrases ("To *Noon* **he fell**, From *Noon*…"); in time, Mulciber follows the sun, falling through space as the solar clock ticks from "Morn" to "Noon" and finally to "Eve." Mulciber and the sun coincide in space and time at Noon, where they both fall together, the former "like a falling Star."

The syntax not only represents a graphic depiction of Mulciber's fall, but it also reinforces a complex relationship between time and space in *Paradise Lost*. As John Leonard (1990) describes it, "'A Summer's day' is not (as it had first seemed) an indication of slow speed, but a measure of time, suggesting the astronomical distance from which 'Mulciber' has been thrown" (p. 84). Here,

because the day marks out the chronological interval over which the immense distance is crossed, time is directly correlated to space. Alastair Fowler (2003) finds a peculiarly Renaissance ambiguity in the word:

> Even so, *space* is still a hard word in *Paradise Lost*, giving rise to many cruxes. Sometimes, like Latin *spatium*, it refers to temporal extent: "Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night" (i.50)....Elsewhere (again like *spatium*), it means "interval, circuit, course", indifferently temporal and spatial. But what of "Space may produce new worlds" (i.650)? (p. 5)

In Mulciber's fall, however, we get a syntactical picture of all three senses of *space* united: The prepositional objects track out the "temporal extent" of the day, the positioning of the subject and verb provide a spatial coordinate in the sky (where there may be 'space' for new worlds), and both combine to describe the "interval, circuit, course" of the entire fall itself. Despite the immensity of space this picture opens up, Mulciber's fall is still but a fraction of the celestial distance covered by the anonymous Architect's actual fall: "As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n/As from the Centre thrice to th'utmost Pole" (1.73–74). Meanwhile, Mulciber's fall through "A Summer's day," complex as it is, contains within it an echo of the purely temporal dimension of the Architect's and other devils' agony upon the lake of fire, "Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night." The Mulciber fable may indeed be "Erring," but even as a distortion of the truth, it still cannot help but point towards it.

Here is the passage again with font substitutions and square brackets to highlight key words in the syntactical pattern:

> [from *Morn*
> To *Noon*] **he fell**, [from *Noon* to dewy *Eve*,]
> A Summer's day; and with the setting Sun,
> Dropt from the **Zenith** like a falling Star,
> On Lemnos th'Aégean Isle. (1.742–46)

This arrangement is in marked contrast to Buchanan's (1773) rendering of the lines into what is for him its "grammatical construction" according to the analytical "Conceptions of the mind":

> He fell from morn to noon, and from noon
> To dewy eve, a whole Summer's day; And he
> Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
> With the setting sun, on Lemnos the Aegean isle.
> Thus they relate, but erring. (p. 85)

Although Buchanan does not provide line breaks in the body of his rendering (he does in the "Advertisement"), we can see by their insertion here that an analytical syntax can still create some of the expressive enjambment Wilkinson and Burnett document. However, it can reproduce none of the original passage's expressive syntactical effects. Although both pictorial enjambment and pictorial syntax (what Wilkinson would call "Metaphorical Word Order") involve the spatial

arrangement of words to create expressive content, only pictorial syntax would suffer at the hands of a uniformly imposed analytical syntax. Therefore, those pictorial syntactical effects must depend on a synthetic syntax. A synthetic syntax may make expressive enjambment easier, but such inversions are not necessary for it.

Another passage, falling as it does within an epic simile, lacks the intricate veil of deceit woven over the Architect/Mulciber account, but it uses the same technique of inverted synthetic syntax to create an equally evocative picture of descent. While Satan begins his solitary "enterprise" against Mankind, the devils spill forth from the *Stygian* Council, and "each his several way/Pursues" (2.523–24). Amongst the catalogue of these pursuits, we see:

> Others with vast Typhoean rage more fell
> Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air
> In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
> As when Alcides from Oechalia Crown'd
> With conquest, felt th'envenom'd robe, and tore
> Through pain up by the roots Thessalian Pines,
> And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
> Into th'Euboic Sea. (2.539–46)

Within the Classical vehicle of the simile, Alcides (Hercules) does three things: He feels "th'envenom'd robe," tears up Thessalian Pines by their roots, and throws his friend Lichas from the top of a mountain into the sea.

This analytical listing of Alcides' actions is in sharp contrast to the synthetic depictions in the actual lines. In the second action, the prepositional phrase "through pain" is inserted parenthetically between the verb "tore" and its obligatory adverb "up."[6] The parenthesis results in a cluster of three prepositions all in close enough proximity to the verb to act, potentially, as its modifier ("**tore**/*Through* pain *up by*…"). For this reason, the insertion is far more disruptive than the more standard insertion of an object between a verb and its obligatory adverb: "through pain/(he) **tore** *Thessalian pines* **up** by the roots." The cacophony this tangle of prepositions creates in the original lines seems to exact too high a sacrifice of basic comprehension for the pattern to be a mere mimetic echo of "the wild uproar" raised in the simile's demonic tenor. In this way, when measured against standard colloquial speech, the existing division is as egregious in English as those disruptions of standard Latin word order documented by Young (1933), Wilkinson (1963), and Lateiner (1990). For such a syntactical split to occur in a passage describing trees forcefully separated from the ground argues for the kind of context-dependent occurrences Lateiner sees in Ovid. Here, however, it is not the trees that are being split, but the act of tearing up itself. In its present position, the prepositional phrase is operating in two ways: as manner (Alcides is tearing up the trees through the added agency of his pain) and conceptually, as place (he is tearing through the pain at the same time that he is tearing up the trees by their roots). Only with the prepositional phrase in its present position is this complex duality of meanings generated.

Alcides' third action yields a far more graphic example of inverted synthetic syntax following sense, in that it portrays concrete objects moving through space. Here, analytically, Alcides throws Lichas from the top of Oeta into the Euboic Sea, but this sequence of implied subject, verb, direct object, prepositional phrase, and prepositional phrase is scrambled into the highly volatile, and synthetic, implied subject (*he*), direct object (*Lichas*), prepositional phrase (*from the top of Oeta*), verb (*threw*), prepositional phrase (*into the Euboic Sea*). Although the implied subject has some latitude in its placement, its actual absence in the line increases the risk that, according to analytical expectations, Lichas will be mistaken for the subject of the main clause in the synthetic inversion. Why take such a risk? The line could just as easily have run "And he from the top of Oeta threw/Lichas into the Euboic Sea," with the enjambment (following Wilkinson, Lateiner, and Burnett) plunging Lichas into the waters below after the spatial and vocal gap created by the line break.

However, the lines as written generate a far different, but no less dramatic, picture. Unlike Mulciber's seemingly endless celestial parabola, Lichas's fall is violent and precipitous. The inversion places him at the very start of the sequence, followed by the prepositional phrase locating the spatial origin for his flight, then the verb propelling the clause over the gap of the line break, to come to rest finally in the prepositional phrase of his fatal destination. As in Mulciber's fall, the prepositional phrases trace out a parabola, but this time only through space (*from* the top of Oeta **threw**/*Into* the Euboic Sea), while Lichas moves from the beginning of the line, over the mountain, across the line break to the waters

below. Pictorially, the syntax launches Alcides' hapless friend the maximum possible distance within the clause from the first word (Lichas) to the last (Sea). His final resting place stands as the final word in the epic simile.

These syntactical deviations in the passage have been previously noted in an exchange between two earlier Miltonists, but without either making specific reference to the pictorial nature of the line's syntax. Donald Davie (1960) begins the exchange:

> in lines 543 and 544, the interposition of "Through pain" precludes both of two possible dramatic effects—either the violence of "Tore" at the beginning of the line, or the more effective muscularity of having "tore" separated by the line-ending from "Up". Similarly, in the last two lines of the…passage the Latinate inversion of word-order means that as we launch out from "threw" into the last line, we are asking not "What was thrown?" but only the much less interesting question "thrown where?" In fact, this question is so unexciting that we don't even ask it; so that "Into the *Euboic* Sea" hangs superfluous—the sentence could just as well have ended where the line ends, after "threw." (pp. 75–76)

For Davie, the opportunity costs presented by the passage are too great: The "interposition" of the prepositional phrase in the second action and "the Latinate inversion of word-order" in the third prohibit a "more effective muscularity" that Milton could have achieved through the more "dramatic" uses of enjambment.

Conceptually, Davie rewrites the lines (as Pound and Buchanan do) and then weighs his revision against the original, with the former winning out on his scale of muscular expressiveness. In other words, he is exposing the original's shortcomings by demonstrating how it could have been better.

Christopher Ricks (1963) responds by accepting Davie's measure of more or less expressive "muscularity," but argues instead that the original lines actually possess more of it than the alterations Davie suggests do. In the second action, for example, Ricks states, "But surely the line as written has an 'even more effective muscularity', in separating *tore* and *up* even more violently. The agonized word-order presents the knotted effort of Hercules" (p. 45). Despite Ricks' assurance that the line "surely" has the stated degree of effect, how the word-order does its *presenting* is missing: There is a gap in his equation of the line's "agonized word-order" with Hercules's "knotted effort." Ricks's matching adjectives (agonized/knotted) attempt to bridge this gap, but it is difficult to measure how a particular syntactical arrangement can be "agonized." However intuitively apt the match may appear, *agonized* can literally be applied only to a person (presumably, the writer or reader in this case), and so Ricks's argument in its present form is vulnerable to charges of that particularly critical species of pathetic fallacy, subjective projection.

In fact, as we may recall from Chapter 1, this type of psychological projection onto grammatical structures is exactly what fuels the fallacious logical circularity Stanley Fish sees lying, like a black hole, at the heart of all purportedly "scientific and objective" stylistic analyses—iconic grammar, specifically, but

also all Stylistics in general. Ricks' "agonized" syntax contains a fundamental gap between the grammatical syntactical data and its psychological reading, thus making it "arbitrary" and "unconstrained by anything in [its] machinery," in Fish's eyes (1980, p. 90). Thus, although Ricks never claims to be objective or scientific, his analysis still falls prey to the inexorable gravitational pull of Fish's stylistic circularity.

Ricks is equally forceful in his response to Davie's reading of Alcides' third action, but the basis for that response leads to a second limitation of a stylistic defence of the passage's inverted syntax:

> Again this seems wrong-headed. It is not self-evident that "What was thrown?" is a more interesting question than "thrown where?" The impressive thing is not that Hercules was able to throw a man—that is not a superhuman feat of strength—but that he was able to throw him such a long way. No doubt there are contexts in which "What was thrown?" is a much more interesting question, but it is odd to suppose that there is a Platonic quality of "Interest" to which that question is always much closer. In this case, it seems clear that "thrown where?" is more interesting, and that the sentence could not "just have well ended where the line ends."
>
> (p. 45)

Here, Ricks substitutes his context-dependent value system for Davie's ideal, universal ("Platonic") one, but both beg the question "More interesting to whom, where, and when?" The assumed answer in both cases is "To everyone,

everywhere, at any time," when what it really means is "more interesting to me, here, in the twentieth century." In this way, Ricks's method ends up being as universalizing as Davie's, only in a different way; whereas Davie appeals to a depersonalized abstract category (it is the *question* that is inherently more or less interesting, and *we* react accordingly), Ricks assumes that his own reaction to the lines (his interest) will be shared by everybody. This is not to say that *no one* will, only that "interest" is as problematic as "muscularity" when used as a measure for a line's value.

However, when we inject the pictorial use of syntax into this debate, the scales tip in favour of Ricks. Although it is unclear where Davie would place the prepositional phrase "Through pain" in the second action (or whether he would include it at all), the altered positioning required to create the dramatic enjambment he seeks would potentially collapse the complex dual meaning of the phrase down to only one, manner: pain as fuel for Alcides' act ("through pain/Tore up" or "and tore/Up through pain"). The third action fares far worse: Davie's omission of "Into th'Euboic Sea" would lop off half of the picture that the present syntax creates, and so the entire effect would be lost. (Following Ricks, just how hard is it to throw someone off a mountain?) Thus, Ricks sees the complex semantic content the original lines generate, but lacks a clear mechanism by which that extra content is produced.

A pictorial use of synthetic syntax could explain both *how* the word-order "presents" Hercules' effort and *why* Lichas's final destination is so essential, without our having to rely on subjective projection or a universalized reader to do

it. That such expressive content (or "muscularity" as Davies and Ricks would have it) comes from the passage's synthetic inverted syntax is made clear if we remove it altogether, as Buchanan (1773) does in his analytical grammatical rendering:

> As when Alcides, crowned with conquest from Oechalia,
> Felt the invenomed robe, and, through pain, tore
> Up the Thessalian Pines by the roots, and threw
> Lichas from the top of Oeta into the Euboic Sea.
>
> (p. 131)

Here, Buchanan's analytical syntax can be arranged to create expressive line breaks (scansion aside), but the adverbial phrase *through pain* collapses down to only one of its dual meanings, just as Davies' rewrite would do. Meanwhile, Lichas is still being thrown, but this time without the monumental momentum of Milton's inverted synthetic syntax propelling him. Analytically, Alcides could just as easily be knocking Lichas off the mountain; synthetically, he launches him from a syntactical catapult.

The syntactical synthetic pictures of falling in these epic similes are echoed by that most primordial of falls, and their progenitor: Satan's expulsion from Heaven. Here, in a simple sentence reminiscent of the processional transitions in the catalogue of devils, we have Satan flung, like Lichas, from the beginning of the sentence to the end:

> *Him* the Almighty power

Hurled headlong flaming from th'ethereal sky

With hideous ruin and combustion down

To bottomless *perdition.* (1.44–47)

The full enervating force of a uniformly analytical syntax imposed on the passage is felt through Buchanan's (1773) "grammatical" rendering:

But the almighty power hurled *him*

(who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms)

Headlong flaming from the etherial sky

With hideous ruin and combustion down

To bottomless *perdition.* (pp. 23–24)

Buchanan's shifting of the relative clause, "who durst defy th'Omnipotent to arms," from its synthetically "misplaced" position two lines down (49) to its "proper" analytical position (as an aside) may increase the distance the direct object Satan (*him*) has to fall, but the resultant syntactical slowing bleeds out all of the force of the original's inversion. Lichas's catapult becomes Mulciber's endless fall.

Lest we think that such synthetic syntactical picturing is only good for producing images of falling, here are two more synthetic pictures linked to the infernal world. In the first, the image is initially established as Satan casts his eyes "round":

round he throws his baleful eyes

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay

Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:

At once as far as angels' ken he views

The dismal situation waste and wild,

A dungeon horrible, on all sides *round.*

(1.56–61)

That this repetition of *round* spatially creates a circle could be as much a product of our selection process as it would be of Milton's deliberate crafting. Plus, the full pattern depends on only one slight synthetic inversion: "round he throws" for the analytical "he throws round."

However, twenty lines down, we get a syntactical synthetic inversion that enacts this "round":

There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed

With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,

He soon *discerns*, and welt'ring by his side

One next himself in power, and next in crime.

(1.76–79)

Buchanan's (1773) rewrite places the subject, verb, and direct objects in their "expected" analytical positions:

There **he** soon *discerns* the companions of his fall,

Overwhelmed with floods and whirlwinds

Of tempestuous fire; and **he** *discerns* one next

Himself in power, and next to him in crime,

Weltering at his side. (p. 26)

What is synthetically a circular movement from the first direct object (*the companions*) to the subject and verb (*He…discerns*) back to the second direct object (*One* of those companions) becomes for Buchanan two separate sentences with the "Ellipses supplied": "He soon discerns the companions…and he discerns one." This analytical sequence could just as easily have been produced without Buchanan supplying the ellipses: "He soon discerns the companions…and one." Either way, the original synthetic "round" is replaced by a strict analytical "line," and so, the expressive syntactical synthetic picture is summarily erased.

A second image defies even Buchanan's analytical principles. When Satan navigates his way through Chaos, the syntax creates an antimetabole that recreates the image of a whirlpool:

> Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
> Charybdis, and by th'other whirlpool steered.
> So **he** [with difficulty and labour hard]
> *Moved on*, [with difficulty and labour] **he**.
>
> (2.1019–22)

As we can see by the typographic marks illustrating the syntactical pattern, the line moves from the subject, to a prepositional phrase, to the verb, and then back to the same prepositional phrase, only to end of up at the same subject. The second half entails a synthetic inversion ("Moved on, with difficulty and labour he") of the first half's analytical syntax ("he with difficulty and labour moved on"), and so, although there is much movement in the whirlpool, there is little to no progress through it. Buchanan (1773) valiantly tries to untangle the passage

analytically, but in his retention of the dangling *he* at the end, concedes that the passage defies a linear analytical "Conception of the mind": "So he moved on with difficulty and hard labour; with difficulty and hard labour he" (p. 170). Even here, however, Buchanan's quasi-analytical sequence removes the doubling of the verb in the original ("he…moved on…he"), and so neutralises the whirlpool at the centre of Milton's synthetic syntactic picture.

From these synthetic syntactical pictures, we may conclude that in the hands of *Paradise Lost*'s narrator, such a technique is ideal for setting a scene or describing an action whether in the poem's main narrative or the narrative vignettes contained within an epic simile, but the narrator also uses syntactical inversions to dramatic effect. At a key moment in the narrative, a yet unfallen Eve parts from an equally prelapsarian Adam after she convinces him that they can work separately: "Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand,/Soft she withdrew" (9.385–86). Ricks (1963) focuses on *soft* as one of Richardson's (1962) "squinting modifiers," and so through the "fluid" syntax praised by Lewis (1942), Ricks demonstrates how the modifier applies to Eve's action (as an adverb), to Eve's hand (as an adjective), and even to Eve herself (as another adjective) (pp. 89–90). A strictly analytical version of the line would run "(Soft) she withdrew her hand from her husband's hand."

Here, "Soft" becomes problematic in an analytical system. Without an inflected *–ly* ending to lock it into an adverbial function, its positioning solely determines whether it is operating as an adverb or an adjective, and what its referent is: "Soft she" (adjective modifying Eve), "soft withdrew" (adverb

modifying the verb), and "her soft hand" (adjective modifying Eve's hand). Because modifiers, and especially *–ly* adverbs, have some flexibility in placement even in an analytical syntax, the "fluidity" of "Soft" is not necessarily a product of a synthetic syntax. However, in a purely analytical system, such as Buchanan's (1773),[7] the *–ly* inflection would either have to be added, allowing it to move, "Softly she…," or its uninflected version at the beginning of the line would limit its reference to the subject, *she*. Thus, the multiplicity of meaning that Ricks ascribes to *soft*, although not necessarily a product of an inverted synthetic syntax, is at least facilitated by it.

Beyond the fluid referentiality of "Soft," however, the contrast between the analytical and synthetic versions of the line uncovers another syntactical picture in the synthetic, but not in the analytic. To bring that picture to the fore, let us place the analytical version below the synthetic original:

> Soft she withdrew her hand from her husband's hand.
>
> From her husband's hand her hand/Soft she withdrew.

The analytical order breaks up the original's graphic linking of the two hands spatially on the page: "hand her hand." The syntactic picture of the two hands, being joined, initially, only to be separated, ultimately, by the verb, exists solely in the synthetic version. This micro-effect of delay at the syntactical level is very much in keeping with what John K. Hale (2001) sees as the overall effect of the parting scene: "the wrenching slowness of the pacing, the persevering lingering upon the watching Adam's ache, are producing the emotions of tragedy, namely pity and fear—to which, in fact, the epic voice has begun by referring: 'I now

must change/Those notes to tragic' (9.5–6)" (p. 34). The analytical version of the parting hands accelerates time along the linear path of its syntactical arrow from subject to verb to object to prepositional phrase; in contrast, the synthetic line holds the joined hands suspended in space until the very last moment when the verb separates them.

When we place this image of Adam and Eve's joined, then parting, hands before the Fall within the context of other comparable images in the poem (and there are many), we begin to see how this particular synthetic syntactic picture changes across the wider expanse of the text. In Eve's account of her creation, for example, she uses a straightforward analytical syntax: "with that thy gentle hand/Seiz'd mine, I yielded" (4.488–89). The harsh verb "Seiz'd" stands between the subject, Adam's "gentle hand," and her own as the object, with the simple SV, "I yielded," added as an asyndeton tipping the balance towards "gentle." In Adam's account of the same scene, he removes the hands from the picture, but the analytical syntax of the core sentence ("I led her") remains at the centre, balanced off by a preceding prepositional phrase ("To the Nuptial Bow'r") and a subsequent flattering participial modifier ("blushing like the Morn") for Eve: "To the Nuptial Bow'r/I led her blushing like the Morn" (8.510–11).

Immediately after the Fall, we get a very different configuration of these same elements, but with a very different OSV inversion: "Her hand he seiz'd, and to a shady bank,/Thick overhead with verdant roof imbowr'd/He led her nothing loath" (9.1037–39). The mutuality of "hand her hand," knitted into the synthetic syntax and its analytical oxymoronic equivalent "thy gentle hand seiz'd mine"

have now given way to a very different relation of Adam as subject seizing the object of Eve's hand; "I yielded" and "I led her" are as equally analytical as "He led her," but the modifier "blushing like the Morn" has given way to "nothing loath." With the final lines of the poem, this reshuffling of syntactical components and images culminates in those linked hands, joined syntactically before the Fall, becoming merely one in a string of parenthetical modifiers: "They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,/Through Eden took thir solitary way" (12.648–49). Adam and Eve are still joined, but that union of hands, as a mere modifier, can now be just as easily removed as added to the sentence.[8]

These relationships, amounting to what can only be called separation anxiety, reach their breaking point when Eve has fallen, but Adam has not. After she has eaten of the apple,[9] Eve resolves to pass on her trespass to Adam:

> Confirmed then I resolve,
> Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
> So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
> I could endure, without him live no life.
>
> (9. 532–38)

Her deliberation begins analytically: "I resolve," "Adam shall share with me," and "I love him"; but it ends synthetically: "with him all deaths I could endure" linking Adam (*him*), *death*, and Eve (*I*) all before the verb. Elliptically, her subject continues to the next verb, where we get the synthetic grouping, "without him (I could) live no life." The inversion clusters *him*, (*I*), and *live* together against the alternative "no life." An analytical sequence would run "I could

endure all deaths with him, but I could live no life without him." Even allowing for some flexibility in position for the prepositional phrases, "with him" and "without him," however, the analytical pattern would still fail to generate the initial synthetic grouping of *him/death/I.*

That Adam is thinking along these same lines is made evident when "he inward silence" breaks (9.895) in what is an unprecedented prelapsarian internal monologue:

> Some curséd fraud
> Of Enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown
> And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee
> Certain my resolution is to die;
> How can I live without thee, how forgo
> Thy sweet convérse and love so dearly joined,
> To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
> (9.904–10)

Analytically, fraud beguiles Eve, Adam cannot live without her, and he cannot forgo her convérse and love. These are strictly subject-verb-object linear strings that consequently separate the subject from the object in syntactic space. By contrast, the synthetic strings "(Some curséd fraud) me with thee hath ruined," and "with thee/Certain my resolution is to die" create the very same pronoun clusters[10] we saw in Eve's speech: "me with thee" and "with thee…my." When Adam reaches his final resolution, then, it comes as no surprise that he recapitulates the same pronoun groupings: "from thy state/Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe" (9.915–16). A strictly analytical sequence would run "Mine

never shall be parted from thy state," but this would separate *Mine* from *thy* within the very syntactical space of the utterance. That the synthetic pronoun groupings, linking their referents, appear in lines in which the referents agonize over being separated adds a level of poignancy to the expressive content that the inversions generate. Their poignancy is only increased when we reflect them backwards onto Adam's gentler synthetic placement of the pronouns, intensified by the line break, before their parting:

> Seek not temptation then, which to avoid
> Were better, and most likely if from me
> Thou sever not. (9.364–66)

After the Fall, when Michael reveals Eve's final sentence to her, he links her and Adam through their respective pronouns but ends with a synthetic inversion that reproduces the same social, power, and status relationships we witnessed in the procession of the devils: "him to follow thou art bound" (11.291). Eve will still be with Adam outside Eden, but as Michael's inverted syntax demonstrates, Eve (*thou*) will always come after Adam (*him*).

When we turn our synthetic syntactic eyes from the tempted to the tempter, we may be surprised at what we find there. In her essay "'Both English and Latin': Milton's Bilingual Muse," Estelle Haan (2007) quotes the following passage from Satan's temptation of Eve:

> Wonder not, sovereign mistress, if perhaps
> Thou canst, who art sole wonder, much less arm

Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate I thus single, nor have feared
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair.

(9.532–38)

Within this passage, Haan notes how "the labyrinthine and even serpentine syntax of these lines mirrors the orator's quasi-Ciceronian manipulation of language," and then she goes on to identify the building up of subordinate clauses in an analysis that recalls Corns' (1990) approach to Milton's Latinate interclausal hypotaxis in his study *Milton's Language*. What is difficult to see here is why Satan's hypotaxis would be any more "labyrinthine" or "serpentine" than the narrator's, Adam and Eve's, or in fact, God's. Further, how does this "mirror" an orator's "quasi-Ciceronian manipulation of language"? How does one represent (mirror) the image of an orator's manipulation of language? With our sensitisation to synthetic syntactical patterning, would we not expect to find in the passage's inversions an actual serpentine pattern within the syntax?

The answer is paradoxical, and unexpected. Syntactically, the most noticeable feature of the passage is the difficulty inherent in piecing together (John Tyndall [1868] would say "piercing through") the main clause. As Haan notes, we begin with an imperative "Wonder not," but after a subordinate clause and a relative clause, with both interrupted by appositives ("sovereign mistress," "the heaven of mildness," "Displeased"), it is not until three lines later that we

receive the relative *that* clause to provide the answer "…that I approach thee thus." However, the chain of things not to wonder at does not end there; we then have a synthetic inversion worthy of Pound's ire, "and [that] gaze/Insatiate I thus single." The best analytical version would be "and that I thus single insatiate gaze" with "single" and "insatiate" possibly functioning as examples of Lewis's "fluid" squinting modifiers. Finally, we have the last relative clause "Wonder not…[that I] have feared/Thy awful brow" (although the double negative makes this last sense uncertain "Wonder not…nor that I have"). The sense is that he is telling Eve not to wonder that he has approached her despite his fear. Although the passage contains all of the techniques of synthetic syntax—inversions, parentheses, even squinting modifiers (according to Lewis [1942] and Richardson [1962])—such techniques never coalesce to produce an additional syntactic content to support the words' semantic content. They are a synthetic syntactic frame devoid of an expressive picture. The paradox lies in the fact that in producing no extra expressive content through his synthetic syntax, Satan is, in fact, "mirroring" the expressive content of a false orator producing no expressive content.

This empty frame is in marked contrast to a Satanic passage that does create a syntactic picture, but here, Satan is speaking in an aside to himself as he observes Adam and Eve unawares in Book IV: "hell shall unfold,/To entertain you two, her widest gates,/And send forth all her kings" (381–83). The parenthetical insertion of the infinitive phrase "To entertain you two" interrupts the SVO of the main clause. The effect is an embedding of Adam and Eve (you)

within hell (the subject) on the one side and her gates (the object) on the other: the unfolding is enacted in the subject and verb's stretch across the divide of the infinitive phrase. While hell and her gates unfold within the syntax, the infinitive enfolds the innocent duo. Leonard (2001) provides us with a possible etymological bridge:

> Satan's 'entertain' plays on this sense ["to receive," "to show hospitality to"], but his primary meaning is 'admit and contain' (*OED* 11). Satan means exactly what he says when he promises that the *gates* will entertain Adam and Eve. He is making an etymological pun on Latin *intertenere*, 'to hold among' or 'hold between'. (p. 398)

The fact that the phrase containing this pun occurs *between* the subject/verb and the direct object, reinforces this sense on a syntactic level: "To entertain" actually places the couple "you" between "hell" and "her gates." Satan is making a syntactic, as well as a semantic, pun here.

The differences between the two passages are primarily at the situational and interpersonal level, rather than at the textual level of technique. In the first passage of Satan's temptation, Eve has to piece together the imperative with its attendant relative clauses *and* unscramble the inverted word order in the second relative clause. All of this syntactical labour, however, is in aid of merely accessing the semantic content—any semantic content—from the words themselves. Despite the technical appearances, there is no additional syntactic

image to decode. The syntactic pyrotechnics are a means towards no other end than to distract, confuse, and frustrate. In Satan's pseudo-soliloquy, however, he is free to express himself because he has no other audience than himself; there is no ulterior motive behind his rhetorical flourishes. He is thus free to paint synthetic syntactical pictures for himself, but for no other.

The *OED* lists the following passage from Milton's (1641) *Animadversions Upon the Remonstrant's Defence Against Smectymnuus* as one of the first recorded instances of the word *syntaxis* in the English language:[11]

> But if your meaning be with a violent hyperbaton to transpose the text, as if the words lay thus in order, "neglect not the gift of presbytery": this were a construction like a harquebuss shot over a file of words twelve deep, without authority to bid them stoop; or to make the word gift, like the river Mole in Surry, to run under the bottom of a long line, and so start up to govern the word presbytery, as in immediate syntaxis; a device ridiculous enough to make good that old wife's tale of a certain queen of England that sunk at Charing-cross, and rose up at Queenhithe. (V.39)

As James Egan (2009) tells us, the animadversion as a rhetorical form, with its quotation and reply format, was traditionally concerned with "rebuttal, ordinarily literal, logical, and straightforward" (p. 203). However, Egan also sees Milton's *Animadversions* participating in a specifically English seventeenth-century use of the form for "rancorous infighting and *ad hominem* attack" through "overt verbal

assault," "satiric diction," and "sarcastic wit and wordplay" (p. 204). The passage the *OED* quotes is Milton's reply to Bishop Joseph Hall's claim that in rejecting the Presbytery, the Smectynmians are rejecting God's gift.

What is of especial interest to us here is the manner in which Milton mounts his counterattack. Both Hall, as the Remonstrant, and Milton, as the Answerer, are referring to the biblical passage "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 *Tim.* 4:14). For the passage to mean what Hall claims it does, Milton suggests that Hall would have to employ a "violent hyperbaton"—"a figure of speech, such as anastrophe or hysteron poteron, using deviation from normal or logical word order to produce an effect" ("Hyperbaton," 2009). The result of such a transposition would be to transform the original passage into its inverted equivalent: "Neglect not the gift [of the presbytery] that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands."

But the two passages are not the same. For Hall's reading to work, as Milton points out, *gift* in the original would have to "govern," or refer to, the prepositional phrase "of the presbytery"—at the end of the sentence. This referential leap is the equivalent of "a harquebus shot over a file of words twelve deep," or the subterranean passage of the River Mole in Surry, or "the old wife's tale of a certain queen of England that sunk at Charing-cross, and rose up at Queenhithe." The cutting edge to both these similes and the metaphor is in keeping with what Egan (2009) sees as Milton's characteristic "assaults in the oratorical low style of satire" in the *Animadversions* (p. 204), but what is

important here is that Milton is accusing Hall of treating *gift* and *of the presbytery* as if they were "in immediate syntaxis." What that adjective suggests is that if there is an "immediate" syntaxis, then there must also be an "intermediate" syntaxis. Hall may deliberately distort the apostle Paul's immediate syntaxis where *hands*, not *gift*, governs *of the presbytery*, but for Milton, Hall's grievous sin is in trying to pass off his transposed intermediate syntaxis for Paul's immediate one. This does not mean that all transposed intermediate syntaxes are distorting and false, and that all immediate syntaxes are revealing and true, only that the two are distinct. Just as Hall and Satan can use an intermediate transposed syntaxis to distort or confuse, others can just as easily use it to reveal or to clarify.

These pages have been but a partial catalogue of Milton's inversions in *Paradise Lost*, both the expressive and the deceptive. They are offered up in the same spirit with which Donald Lateiner (1990) offers up his "Partial Catalogue" of Ovid's pictorial syntax in the *Metamorphoses*. For a full catalogue to be compiled would require a more detailed statistical analysis of the poem from the first line to last. But to do that, we must know what we are looking for, and why we are looking for it. As we have seen, not all syntactical inversions are expressive in the sense that we have seen in this chapter—wh-questions and purely transitional tags, for example. As we have also seen in Chapter 3 with the statistical studies of the Golden Line and pictorial syntax in Classical Latin literature, no one magic number will automatically prove or disprove that a particular poetic structure is deliberate, or even that it exists. What such a comprehensive study would do, instead, is give us a greater understanding of just

how, where, and why Milton's expressive synthetic syntax works the way it does. Before we do that, however, we have to know it is worth looking for.

Notes

[1] Buchanan (1773) fills in these ellipses as follows: "Moloch was the first" (p. 52) and "Next came Chemos" (p. 54). Analytically, the Chemos line should run "Chemos came next" with the subject and verb in their "expected" positions. However, Buchanan preserves the inversion in the same way he does with Dagon, "Next came one" (p. 60).

[2] The following are but a few of these purely transitional tags between speeches: "So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub/Thus answer'd" (1.271), "after him thus Mammon spake" (2.228), "him thus the Anarch old…Answered" (2.988), "him Satan thus accosts" (3.653).

[3] While it is true that Milton uses two analytical sequences in the procession, "Belial came last" (490) marks the end of the primary chain, and "Thammuz came next behind" (446) can be chalked up to a need for variety in what would otherwise be an overly uniform mechanical sequence. After all, out of the nine prime orders, five are inverted. If they were all inverted, then, barring the first and the last in the sequence, that would leave a monotonous seven in between. Without the ellipses of Moloch and Chemos and the analytical respite of Thammuz, the passage would become more a schematic illustration of the syntactic synthetic principle, than a crafted, dynamic medium of expression.

[4] Leonard (1990) in *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* mounts a detailed and convincing argument for the ultimate namelessness of Pandaemonium's Architect, commonly misidentified by readers as Mammon. However, Leonard still elides the architect and Mulciber when he states, "While the architect falls '*with* the setting Sun,' he does not fall *like* it. He falls 'like a falling star'" (p. 84). Both the prepositional phrase and the simile in this passage refer to the fabled Mulciber, and not to the actual, unnamed Architect: an important distinction, because each falls in a different way.

[5] Peter Ackroyd (1997), in his counterfactual novel *Milton in America*, employs an inversion of Mulciber's syntactical parabola, when the narrator describes a delirious Milton, his sight miraculously restored, caught up in the pendulum swing of a Native American spring-hole trap: "From morn to noon he hung, from noon to dewy eve, watching the colours deepen as the day advanced" (p. 159).

[6] The difference in Latin is even more pronounced: "to tear" *scindere* shifts to *convellere* "to tear up" through the addition of the adverb in English. Thus, the positioning of the prepositional phrase, nonstandard in English, is radical when translated into Latin because it effectively splits what is the semantic equivalent of a single word.

A similar argument has been made to expand the scope of the split infinitive to apply to adverbial insertions into verb tense chains: For example, "He *had* **extensively** *prepared* for the exam, but failed nonetheless." The argument by analogy is that if in Latin both the infinitive and the past perfect tense are expressed in one word, then any intervening adverb in English can be classed as a split infinitive. To my mind, the argument renders the particular identity of the grammatical term *infinitive* meaningless when it is so loosely applied to entities as

categorically and effectively distinct as tenses, and in this case, obligatory-adverb-required verbs.

[7] Here again, we must remember that Buchanan died before he could "render" the last six books of *Paradise Lost* into their "grammatical construction." Although we will never know exactly how he would have resolved them, by following the basic analytical principles demonstrated in his first six books, as he recommends youth to do in his "Advertisement" (p. 15), we would not be deviating here too drastically from what he would have produced had he lived.

[8] To some extent, this distinction accounts for why Bentley's (1731) infamous emendation of "social" for "solitary" fails to satisfy the context of the poem as a whole.

[9] As has been remarked many times before, Eve's consuming of the apple is disturbingly reflexive: "Greedily she engorged without restraint,/And knew not eating death" (9.791– 92). In the phrase "eating death," we have yet another of Lewis's (1942) "fluid" modifiers: Eve does not know that she is eating death, and she knows not, yet, the ravenous "eating Death" of Satan's incestuous coupling with Sin.

[10] Similar synthetic pronoun clusters also appear around Satan, Sin, and Death (e.g., "Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing" [2.764] and "(he) Me overtook his mother all dismayed" [2.792]); God and the Son (e.g., "in him all his Father shone" [3.139]); and the Son and Man (e.g., "Behold me then, me for him, life for life/I offer" [3.236–37]). However, in these instances, their expressive content is highly dependent on the radically different contexts of Sin and Death's incestuous generation, the theological paradox of one God in three persons, and the complexities of the Son's incarnation.

[11] Note that Milton's use of the term *syntaxis* here in the *Animadversions* predates his use of it in his *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* (1669) by 28 years.

Chapter Six

Sound and Vision: Speculations on Pragmatics and Milton's Conceptual Syntagmatics

When we conceive of *Paradise Lost*'s sentences, not as streams of thought or speech, but as word-mosaics, one curious corollary of that metaphoric shift is a shift in how we perceive the poem being read. No longer does our reading of the epic constitute solely our audience at a blacked-out performance conducted by an invisible narrator, Satan, God, Adam and Eve, and a cast of thousands. Neither does it collapse into the equivalent of a closet drama, as *Samson Agonistes* is designed to be, where, in reading the poem, we are invited to "stage" it in our heads, providing all the props, costumes, and scenery, and playing all the parts ourselves. Instead, we must be able to step back from what the words "say" and see them also as objects in and of themselves arranged within the syntactical space of their particular sentence. Only then can we access the expressive content that that arrangement conveys. It is in this sense that F. R. Leavis (1936) is correct when he says of Milton, "we are often, in reading him, moved to comment that he is 'external' or that he 'works from the outside'" (p. 53). This "feeling *for* words" from the outside, however, does not entail, as Leavis suggests, an automatic sacrifice of all "feeling *through* words." We must step back from the word-mosaic's tesserae to see the patterns their placements create, but we must also hear what they are saying in our heads to get the full picture.

What a word "says" is primarily its semantic content along the paradigmatic axis of a sentence; what it "shows" is primarily its syntactic content along the syntagmatic axis. We can change a word's semantic content by inserting vertically into its position in the sentence another definition for that word, another intonation for that word, another form of that word, a synonym for that word, or even an entirely different word altogether. It is this type of vertical paradigmatic substitution that fuels much of post-structuralist analysis: Since, as Saussure tells us, the relationship between the sign and the signified is "arbitrary," then there is no "transcendental signified" (no outside referential anchor, if you will) to rule out categorically one substitution over another. Any choice (even the author's), therefore, automatically defers the others, a relation of *différance* amongst all possible choices that makes the paradigmatic axis the axis of absence—the presence of one word marks the absence of others.[1] In this way, substitution along the paradigmatic axis can progress, theoretically, *ad infinitum*, because there are an infinite number of ways "to say" something in a sentence.

This is a far cry from the syntagmatic axis. Within the confines of a strictly analytical SVO sequence, a word's position signals only its grammatical function, but since shifts in its position are not allowed, all its ability to express content (to signify) is therefore displaced onto the paradigmatic axis: To say it differently, we must use different words (i.e., insert them along the paradigmatic axis). Most theorists, then, conceive of the syntagmatic axis as fixed—*in praesentia*, following Saussure—with the paradigmatic axes inserting different meanings, intonations, forms, and words vertically, like a series of bottomless Pez

dispensers, at each slot in the syntagmatic horizontal axis. In this way, the Deconstructionists and the Transformational Grammarians are as much children of the eighteenth-century grammarian's mission to "fix" English syntax as we all are, because whereas the paradigmatic is the axis of absence, the syntagmatic is the axis of presence, whether that presence is the actual analytical SVO sequence we see on the page or the Deep Structure we "see" in our minds at the base of a merely topicalised inverted Surface. For both, vision is presence; sound is absence.

However, once we allow for permutations along the syntagmatic axis, as we do in a synthetic syntax, then the grammatical functions of the words as Subject, Verb, or Object become independent of their positions. Unlike the infinite substitutions along the paradigmatic axis, these syntagmatic permutations by their very nature have a finite number: there are only so many ways one can rearrange SVO, even when the variables of prepositional phrases and other modifiers are added to the mix. If one of those syntagmatic permutations happens to represent a concept—as it does in Lichas's catapult, or a divine or infernal hierarchy, or Adam and Eve's linked hands—then that particular permutation becomes the only one that can express that content. Such syntactical content is fundamentally extra-grammatical and extra-semantic: Grammatical function and word meaning provide the context for it—they are some of the materials out of which it is constructed—but its expressive content is not merely grammatical or semantic. There is another dimension. Such content is the product of grammar, semantics, *and* syntactical positioning. In this way, a synthetic syntactical line is

just as much a "presence" along the syntagmatic axis as an analytical one, but in a very different way—at least, in theory.

In practice, however, Milton's synthetic syntactical inversions in *Paradise Lost*, as we have seen throughout this study, collide head-on with the expectations of an analytical audience. I choose that word *audience* deliberately: The vast majority of spoken sentences in English, with the exception of wh-questions and a few (mostly archaic) others, follow an analytical SVO sequence. Without more inflectional endings to take up the role of coding for grammatical function—and English is shedding more and more of these inflections every day[2]—the burden of conveying those grammatical functions gravitates more and more towards "expected" analytical positions. For Milton's contemporary audience, this drift was not as extreme as it is in our day: They were schooled in the fixed (i.e., dead) inflectional endings producing syntactical "fluidity" in Latin, Ancient Greek, and Hebrew, and they sat on the other side of the largely successful mission of eighteenth-century grammarians (such as James Buchanan) to "fix" wayward English syntax into the analytical "Conceptions of the mind." Today, we read *Paradise Lost* without the aid of these predispositions towards a synthetic syntax, a loss exacerbated by Transformational Grammar's tendency to de-Topicalise inverted Surface Structures into their base-generated Deep Structures. In this respect, Transformational Grammar's Topicalisation rules are at their core the same as Buchanan's syntactical "resolutions," only in twentieth-century garb. The result is that Milton's inverted synthetic sentences in *Paradise Lost* jar increasingly against the increasingly analytical ears of the poem's readers down

through the ages. As this aural drift[3] towards the analytical becomes more and more pronounced, the only way that *Paradise Lost*'s synthetic syntactical signals can still signify is if we see them in space on the page and decode them with our eyes, rather than just with our ears.

This uniquely modern (and here I mean "post-eighteenth century") linguistic drift from the aural to the visual in our relationship to *Paradise Lost*'s syntax is born out by my many attempts to explain this project to friends, family, students, and colleagues over the years. Inevitably, I found that if I tried to provide examples orally, my auditors' eyes would glaze over. From their perspective, hearing the syntactic inversions in "From her husband's hand her hand soft she withdrew," or "Him who disobeys me disobeys," or especially, "And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw into the Euboic sea" amounted to being hit by a blizzard of words with no comprehensible outline to give them shape. However, when I pulled out a notebook, a piece of paper, or a napkin, and started to show them how the order of the words contributed to the words' meaning, then they would see the full import of what had previously sounded to them like an incomprehensible jumble. Although this evidence is purely anecdotal, it does show how a word-mosaic requires us, increasingly, both to hear the semantic content and to see the syntactic pattern. On a purely auditory level, the word-mosaic's inverted word order deviates so drastically from what we expect when speaking or hearing English that chaos ensues, but if we meet those expectations by rearranging those sentences into a "normal" analytical order, then their visual syntactical impact would disappear. In short, for a modern audience bred on

analytical expectations, and free from any other aural supports, Milton's word-mosaic has to be both seen and heard—it has to be read—for it to work.[4]

This should not be the case in Latin. As we know from Hale's (2005) study, the vast majority of Milton's Cambridge exercises were "oral Latin performances" (p. 1), and so any syntactical effects he may have used there would have been readily appreciated by his audience aurally due to the additional signifying sounds supplied by each word's inflectional ending. Whether Milton and his schoolmates saw on the page or heard from their professor's lips Vergil's line "sed *magnum* metuens **se** post *cratera* tegebat," the inflectional endings would have allowed them to derive the grammatical sense *and* register the syntactical picture of Rhoetus hiding himself (**se**) behind the large (*magnum*) bowl (*cratera*). Thus, Milton would have known from experience and practice that Latin synthetic lines, such as Vergil's, whether they are only heard by an audience, or seen and "heard" by a silent reader, would be equally comprehensible.[5]

However, even in Latin, such inflectional tags may not be sufficient for a "full" comprehension of a line. For A. M. Devine and Laurence D. Stephens (2006), in their work on *Latin Word Order*, inversions (or hyperbaton) in Latin are evidence for another lost layer of meaning embalmed within Classical texts:

> Reading a paragraph of Latin without attention to the word order is like taking a black and white photograph. Adding in the word order is like going from black and white to full colour. A whole new dimension of meaning is added, affording an explicit mapping

> from syntax into coherent text and revealing a rich range of subtle interpretive nuances. (p. 5)

For them, such "interpretative nuances" stem from "an explicit mapping from syntax into coherent text," essentially the same operation we have been carrying out here when we contrast the inverted Surface Structure of one of *Paradise Lost*'s lines against its equivalent analytical Deep Structure. Whereas we are deriving an image (the expressive content's picture, concept, or relationship) from the inverted Surface of Milton's word-mosaic, Devine and Stephens hope to recover a voice: how each Latin line was spoken, its stresses and intonations, its pragmatics, or as the *OED* defines it "the use of linguistic signs in actual situations."[6] More power to them, but that pragmatic voice they wish to echo is long-since silent, as is Milton's. At least with *Paradise Lost*, we are still speakers of the same living language.

However, to read the poem only analytically, and to evaluate it aurally against only that reading, is to do an even greater disservice to *Paradise Lost* than what Devine and Stephens see us doing to the Latin Classics. When we fail to give the inverted syntax of Vergil's "sed magnum metuens se post cratera tegebat" its full weight and import, we may be, according to Devine and Stephens, seeing its synthetic syntactical picture only in "black and white," instead of in "colour," but the aural inflectional endings still remain to provide the grammatical sense and function, and the inverted word order still provides the kind of pictorial content Young (1933) and Wilkinson (1963) ascribe to it. It may be black and white, not full colour, but the picture still exists. When we read Milton's "And

Lichas from the top of Oeta threw/Into th'Euboic Sea" (2.545–46), thousands of years of pragmatic evolution by living speakers have already worn away most of the English language's grammatical inflections,[7] but when we read the lines as "And (he) threw Lichas from the top of Oeta into the Euboic Sea," and measure the original line's sound against that, we are seeing the original syntactic picture in neither colour nor black and white—we are not seeing it at all.

Given our aural predilection towards the analytical, it should come as no surprise that one of the most influential twentieth-century detractors of *Paradise Lost*'s Latinate syntax, F. R. Leavis (1936), should prefer Shakespeare, a playwright, over Milton, and praise Milton's *Comus* (p. 59), a masque, and to a lesser extent, *Samson Agonistes* (p. 66), a closet drama, to the detriment of *Paradise Lost*. Both *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes* are fundamentally oral performances, whether on a physical or mental stage, and so we would expect them to contain a higher incidence of analytical SVO sequences than the synthetic syntactically inverted epic *Paradise Lost*. Future study will have to bear this hypothesis out, and a wider comparative analysis of non-dramatic Renaissance verse, such as Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and Spenser's *The Fairie Queene*, could provide valuable, though not conclusive, additional argumentative support. Regardless, at the moment, *Paradise Lost* remains marooned in a surrounding sea of our modern, primarily aural, analytical expectations.

One possible way to bridge this gap and preserve *Paradise Lost*'s synthetic syntactical content, while easing the aural shock of its inverted structures for a modern audience, would be to produce an edition of the poem that

would include visual markers for the pragmatic pauses necessary to avoid the confusions generated by our analytical expectations. Such an encoding of pragmatics could take many forms, but a preliminary stab at such a monumental enterprise may at least show us where to start.

Taking but three of our examples of the poem's expressive synthetic syntactical constructions as models, we can reformat them (not resolve them) so that we see these auxiliary pragmatic pauses. Thus:

> And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
> Into th'Euboic sea. (2.545–46)

would become under this system:

> And[,] Lichas[,] from the top of Oeta[,] threw
> Into th'Euboic sea.

The pragmatic pauses, indicated by [,], would isolate aurally the Topicalised direct object *Lichas* and prevent it from running into the verb *threw*, thereby alleviating the analytical tendency to mis-take *Lichas* for the subject. In this case, these additional pragmatic pauses would also allow for multiple insertion points for the true (but implied) subject, *Alcides* or *he*, from the previous clause:

> As when Alcides[,] from Oechalia crowned
> With conquest, felt th'envenomed robe, and tore[,]
> Through pain[,] up by the roots[,] Thessalian pines.
> (2.542–44)

For the line that caused Ezra Pound such consternation from 1917 to 1934, such paradigmatic markings would potentially remove the aural analytical impediments he highlights:

> Him[,] who disobeys[,]/Me[,] disobeys. (5.611–12)

Finally, Adam and Eve's parting scene, though less subject to the severe grammatical miscomprehension of the other two passages' syntactical inversions, could be depicted pragmatically as follows:

> Thus saying, from her husband's hand[,] her hand[,]
> Soft[,] she withdrew. (9.385–86)

Editors, and especially academic editors, are inherently conservative when it comes to altering an author's original text; they are acutely aware of the textual hurricanes that even a minute alteration in the beat of an original punctuation mark's wings can generate. However, if such a pragmatic guide to *Paradise Lost* were clear and upfront in its "Introduction" and body pages about its purpose, reasons, and methodology, then I believe it could make an important, if carefully circumscribed, contribution to the field.

The need that such a contribution could possibly meet is, frankly, the impenetrable occult mystery that enshrouds oral performances of *Paradise Lost* to this day. Corns (2001) identifies Leavis's attack on Milton as based on "the *sound* of the poetry" (p. 90) and offers the following antidote:

> the best guidance the reader can have about Milton's verse is the evidence of his or her own ears. Hearing the poem read by competent readers—and reading it aloud oneself—are exercises of enormous value. (p. 92)

What this oral/aural competency of *Paradise Lost* entails, Corns suggests, involves speaking and hearing it in "ways that suggestively explore the subtle accommodations between its demanding syntax, its rhetorical figuring and the residual pulls of an underlying prosodic pattern" (p. 91). What a pragmatic guide to *Paradise Lost* would be is a concrete accommodation of Milton's synthetic inverted syntax to the analytical syntactical expectations of the poem's present audience. Rather than attacking the poem's oral performance as a series of intuitive hits and misses, the reader could begin with the base pragmatic pauses and still add all his or her own vocal intonations, pacing, phrasings, colourings, height and pitch, from there. In essence, this process is really no different than the type of pragmatic analysis actors engage in before they attempt to convey orally the "stylised" Renaissance language of a Shakespeare play to a modern audience—except they do not have to grapple with the added handicap of a rampantly inverted synthetic syntax.

The spirit informing such a guide, strangely enough, is the same as that with which James Buchanan (1773) offered up his *First Six Books of* Paradise Lost, *Rendered into Grammatical Construction*, although his edition is far from pragmatic. As we have seen, his edition was "Designed For the Use of our most eminent Schools, and of private Gentleman and Ladies; and also Foreigners of

Distinction, who would read this admirable Poem with Understanding and Taste." Buchanan's resolutions and grammatical renderings are an important first step to our full appreciation of *Paradise Lost*'s inverted synthetic syntax, just as John Tyndall's (1868) "piercing through the involved and inverted sentences" (p. 101) and Transformational Grammar's de-Topicalisations of Surface Structures are. However, it is the first step, not the only step. As long as we reflect those "same natural Order[s]," "true grammatical structure[s]," and base-generated Deep Structures back onto the original, then in the difference between the two, we can see the full expressive content of what Milton actually wrote. From there, the possibilities for oral performances, when responsive to the pragmatics of the poem's inverted synthetic syntax, are endless.

Theoretically, however, such potential has caused some difficulty. In his essay "Milton's Graphic Poetry," Richard Bradford (1987) uses such varied oral performances to destabilise Christopher Ricks' (1963) reading, or rather hearing, of Adam and Eve's parting hands, "Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand,/Soft she withdrew" (9.385–86). As we have seen, Ricks focuses on "soft" as one of Richardson's (1962) "squinting modifiers," and so through the "fluid" syntax praised by Lewis (1942), Ricks demonstrates how the modifier applies to Eve's action (as an adverb), to Eve's hand (as an adjective), and even to Eve herself (as another adjective) (pp. 89–90). Bradford criticises Ricks for attempting to posit multiple pragmatic stresses for "soft" within "a single oral performance" (p. 182), and as a result, concludes that "Ricks's analysis involves treating the text as writing but recuperating his findings as speech" (p. 183). While it is true that

Ricks does privilege the oral over the visual in his analysis, this does not necessarily mean that the two must act as "disjunctions" (p. 194), as Bradford claims. "Soft" can be *seen* as having multiple references within the space of a synthetic syntax *and* it can be *heard* as having only one stress at a time when read aloud. The two are not mutually exclusive; we can construct meaning through a variety of sensory media and through a number of oral performances. It is only Bradford who insists, as a way to destabilize Ricks's "total effect," that we as readers must choose only one sensory medium at a time—hearing *or* seeing, and only one aural signal for all time. The value of Bradford's approach to this study, however, is in his exposure of a kind of reflex action that privileges the oral performance and aural reception of a text, but he, as much as Ricks, overlooks the visual dimension of the line's synthetic syntax.

Looking at the passage of Eve's parting again, but this time from the perspective of a synthetic, and therefore, in modern English, a necessarily more visual syntax, we see a different dynamic at work within the Bradford/Ricks debate. Bradford's critique of Ricks hinges on a dissonance between the word's placement and its semantic reference. In an analytical syntax, the placement of *Soft* fixes its referent, and yet, in Ricks's oral performances, he attempts to make the different references simultaneously "present" through his varying shifts in the pragmatic stress. Synthetically, however, "Soft" can have multiple referents within its visual grouping "her hand/Soft she withdrew," because spatially, all three referents are within the same meaningful field of view. Thus, it is only an analytical syntax, which Bradford designates as the "deep structure" of the lines

(p. 183), that resists Ricks's oral variations. Within a synthetic syntax, however, there is ample space for all three referential meanings simultaneously, while at the same time leaving openings for multiple pragmatic variations. Like most theorists, Bradford takes an analytical syntax to be the only syntax there is, but as Milton shows us an analytical syntactical sequence is only one of several.

Such concerns may seem to be the preoccupation of only critical theorists in the latter twentieth century, but the central question behind these debates—whether *Paradise Lost* is primarily visual or aural—has been around for a long time. A passage from Samuel Johnson's (1782) *Lives of the English Poets* has been extensively quoted (and misquoted) by both Milton's defenders and detractors alike. It bears examining in detail, because it sets up the terms of the debate and reveals some interesting connections with the concepts we have been covering here. Dr. Johnson begins by quoting Milton's defence of "The Verse" in the 1668 imprint of the first edition:

> *Rhyme*, he says, and says truly, *is no necessary adjunct of true poetry*. But perhaps, of poetry as a mental operation, metre and musick is no necessary adjunct: it is however by the musick and metre that poetry has been discriminated in all languages; and in languages melodiously constructed, by a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another: where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The musick of the English heroick line strikes the ear so faintly that it is easily lost, unless all

> the syllables of every line co-operate together: this co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another, as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick, *seems to be verse only to the eye*. (p. 229)

For Johnson and his compatriots, the immediate question was whether *Paradise Lost,* without rhyme, could convey the necessary aural signals to qualify as "real" poetry, but his speculation (marked out by "perhaps"), in support of Milton, suggests that "poetry as a mental operation" is not dependent entirely upon its aural signal, its "musick." We have seen many of the "mental operations" involved in the reception of Milton's expressive synthetic syntax, and we have theorised that such a syntax necessitates a shift towards the visual for an audience expecting analytical syntactical sequences, but this does not mean that blank verse *is* verse only to the eye. Although many critics attribute that last italicised dictum to Johnson himself, James Percival (1826) identifies the "ingenious critick" as Edmund Burke (p. 333). Whether this attribution is accurate or not, Johnson's distancing of the statement from himself, through italics and an outside attribution (whether fictional or not), makes clear that he does not necessarily relegate

Milton's blank verse in *Paradise Lost* solely to the visual sphere. Further, even if the statement does come from Burke, what he actually says is "Blank verse *seems* to be verse only to the eye" [italics mine]. That appearance, as we have suggested here, is perhaps more a product of our own increasingly analytical aural expectations than it is an inherent property of the verse. More tellingly, Johnson's "variety of pauses" in blank verse is surprisingly close to the pragmatic pauses we have seen are conducive to the aural transmission of an inverted synthetic syntax to an analytically trained audience.

In our own era, proponents of the visual nature of *Paradise Lost* remain. Merritt Hughes (1957) cites Karl Shapiro's *Essay on Rime* as evidence for the contrast between "the 'auricular' power of Shakespeare's verse with Milton's appeal to the eye" (pp. 199–200):

> No metre more exactly planned exists
> Than his. A perfect mechanism turns
> *Paradise Lost*, his solar masterpiece
> Written in blindness and by count of eye.

Shapiro's paradox (some would call it "divine") of a blind poet counting by the eye becomes psychological when Archie Burnett (2003) speculates that *Paradise Lost*'s expressive spatial enjambments could be a product of Milton's blindness itself:

> Possibly the most striking moments of all in the transitions from line to line in *Paradise Lost* are those when Milton, though blind—

> or (more plausibly?) because blind—shows an acute awareness of the eye movements involved in the reading. (p. 84)

Paul J. Klemp (1977) takes this attention to the spatial arrangement of words on the page one step further when he proposes an acrostic in the lines leading up to Satan's temptation of Eve:

> **S**cipio the heighth of Rome. With tract oblique
> **A**t first, as one who sought access, but feared
> **T**o interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
> **A**s when a ship by skilful steersman wrought
> **N**igh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
>
> (9.510–14)

Such speculations are very difficult to prove, but they do show that others are at least aware of a visual dimension to the poem, and that that visual dimension does not entail a concomitant removal of the aural.

The opposite side of the debate has an unlikely proponent, James Buchanan. In the "Advertisement" to his edition, he (1773) enters the fray as to whether poetry has to include rhyme:

> Rhime, without any other assistance, throws the language off from prose; but, in blank verse, the poet is obliged to use inversion, as well as pomp of sound, and energy of expression, in order to give

> harmony and variety to his numbers, and keep his stile from falling into the flatness of prose. (p. 4)

Thus, the very inversions that his "grammatical rendering" removes are the very things that contribute to *Paradise Lost*'s "pomp of sound, and energy of expression." For T. S. Eliot (1936), that "pomp of sound" would collapse in on itself, losing all touch with either speech or thought:

> I am not suggesting that Milton has no idea to convey which he regards as important: only that the syntax is determined by the musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought. (p. 142)

This music, this pomp—a purely aural signal, in itself and for itself—lies at the heart of Oras's (1967) condemnation of Buchanan for destroying the "personal idiosyncrasy" of Milton's style (p. 265) and Donald Davie's (1960) charge that "the famous music" of Milton "is a matter of vocal colouring and skilful resonance, leading only the voice and the ear" (p. 83), and so the argument that *Paradise Lost* is only an aural signal is present in the arguments of both Milton's defenders and detractors.

This study stands largely as a refutation of this second position. Positing a visual element to *Paradise Lost* admits of both a visual and aural dimension; positing a purely aural dimension removes the visual altogether. As we have seen, Milton's synthetic syntactical inversions are not solely markers that separate the

poem's epic voice from everyday (in other words, analytical) speech. They are not just the echoes of a lost peculiar, idiosyncratic, personal voice. They are all that, granted, but they are also so much more. They are meaningful—they express content—and in a way that a purely analytical, everyday syntax cannot.

If this seems to suggest that Milton's expressive synthetic syntax—*Paradise Lost*'s word mosaic—is superior to an analytical one, that is because it is, but not in the sense of two mutually exclusive systems in which one triumphs over the other. All analytic syntax is inherently synthetic syntax. The analytical sequence of SVO is only one of the many permutations possible under a synthetic system. Thus, a synthetic system includes the analytic, but adherence to a strictly analytical system excludes all the other potentially expressive variations outside its own circle. Even the designation of *Paradise Lost*'s synthetic variations as "deviations" from, or "inversions" of, the analytical "norm" subtly reinforces the confines of that circle. Milton was open to other syntactical possibilities. The question remains whether we are going to see *Paradise Lost*'s word mosaic through synthetic eyes as golden tesserae, or through purely analytical eyes as a jumble of fragmented tiles.

Even here, as we approach the end, we should be careful not to overstate the case. Synthetic syntactical variations do convey expressive content, but they do not do so in the same way as the semantic. In *Iconology*, W. J. T. Mitchell (1986) describes a three-level chain of image making: "A word is an image of an idea, and an idea is an image of a thing, a chain of representation" (p. 22). Pictorialism as the basis for poetics conceives of "the art of language as the art of

reviving the original impressions of sense" (p. 23). Thus, when a poet chooses a word for its semantic content, he or she is trying to approach the image of the thing by evoking "its original impression of sense" through that word, for example, all the adjectives chosen to convey the colours, smells, textures of a rose. Synthetic syntactical patterns, on the other hand, can capture only the idea of that original thing: Lichas's catapult does not actually resemble a catapult, or even convey the sounds, sights, and smells of the original scene. The syntax cannot describe; it can only trace out a schematic representation, an idea, of the action. In this way, semantics strive to leap the chain of representation from the word to the thing, whereas syntactic patterning can provide only a conceptualised or ideational representation, one step removed from the thing. It is for this reason that Lateiner's (1990) "mimetic," Wilkinson's (1963) "metaphoric," and Young's "pictorial" (1933) syntax, as terms, claim more for expressive synthetic syntax than it can possibly deliver.

Despite this limitation, however, we should not discount syntactical representations altogether. They are still capable of conveying powerful information. Although more abstract than the examples we have examined here, David Gay (2000) suggests that in the line "Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born" (3) in the "Nativity Ode," Milton would have been aware that in the chiasmus, he was also evoking the "Greek letter 'X' (chi), the first letter in '*Christos*'" (p. 188). If this kind of ideational representation is possible for chiasmus, then it should also be possible for anastrophe, the inversion of word order. As we have seen, these types of syntactic imaging can be complex,

profound—important—even if they lack the same sensory evocative powers of semantic word choice.

In essence, then, what this study proposes is that in *Paradise Lost*'s synthetic syntactical variations we may find evidence of a form of expression that we find no where else. If Stephen Pinker can say that there is a conceptual difference between "I fill the glass with water" and "I pour the glass with water" (p. 49)—a difference in word choice, or a substitution along the paradigmatic axis—then why could there not be a conceptual difference between Milton's "Your head I him appoint" and the analytical "I appoint him your head"—a difference in word order, or variation along the syntagmatic axis? In this way, Milton's word mosaic may hold the key to something more than just the complex scenes, concepts, and relationships within the poem itself; it may just point the way for us beyond the limitations of an analytical sequential order we take for granted. It may just give us the syntactical space to add to Pinker's conceptual semantics, a conceptual syntagmatics, something that has always been operating *in potentia* within the English language, but that we were unable to see—unable, that is, until *Paradise Lost*'s challenging, frustrating, liberating, fluid syntax gave us the eyes and ears to recognise it, in every sense of that word.

Notes

[1] Thus, Saussure (1916) is able to state "In language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms."

[2] The loss of distinction between *who*, *whom*, *that*, and *which* is well under way, and such common "spelling" errors as *they're/there/their*, *its/it's*, *then/than*, and even *our/are* may herald the future collapse of the present distinctive inflectional forms into a single form whose grammatical function is determined solely analytically—by its position.

[3] I use the word *aural*, rather than *oral*, to emphasis the reception of the syntactical signal, rather than its production.

[4] Although C. S. Lewis (1942) fixes the Greek and Old English primary epics firmly in an oral delivery (p. 14), he does not then necessarily characterise Latin and Miltonic secondary epics as only read. The argumentative gap suggests that for Lewis, secondary (literary) epics are both seen and heard, not merely seen.

[5] One fertile area for future study would be an examination of how visual synthetic syntactical patterns play out against the historical landscape Walter Ong (1982) postulates in his *Orality and Literacy*: *The Technologizing of the Word* and the inner landscape Elspeth Jajdelska (2007) examines in *Silent Reading and the Birth of the Narrator*.

[6] In English, this kind of pragmatic stress is what differentiates "*Jack* ate the doughnut," "Jack *ate* the doughnut," "Jack ate *the* doughnut," and "Jack ate the *doughnut*." For Devine and Stephens (2006), these are the kinds of pragmatic differences they see hyperbaton supplying in Latin. In written English, we often signal these pragmatic stresses through the typographical marks of italics or quotation marks: He's a "real" friend. Analytically, once we lock in the strict SVO sequence, changes in word order are no longer available to serve this pragmatic function, and so we use the insertion of single-word, intensive adjective/adverbs, such as *only* or *just*, to do the job instead.

[7] Nist (1966) attributes this wearing away of inflectional endings in English directly to the accumulative power of thousands of years of pragmatic front-loading of stress: "With the stress located on the root syllable, the inflections have no means whereby to maintain and enforce their functionalism. In short, an evolving analytical syntax needs stressed roots to help fashion its word-group cadences and interdependent semantic relationships; it has little or no use for the synthetic markers known as inflections" (p. 119).

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